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ABSTRACT

The national and European-level studies of the factors that ensure the success of young people's vocational integration and that offer protection against unemployment were reviewed. The research established that, in most national statistical reports, information on the occupational progress of school-leavers and those emerging from initial training was sparse. It was concluded that, although national statistics and surveys could be used to supplement and explain some of the findings of European surveys, any attempts to use national statistics gathered in the various European countries for purposes of comparison should proceed with caution. Networks currently working in the field of transition at the European level were encouraged to publish their data so as to optimize the use of research work. It was further recommended that the process of conducting comparative studies of the factors ensuring successful transition from the educational system into the labor market begin with prioritization of the large number of themes currently being tackled in national publications. (The report contains 149 references. Appended is a discussion of young people's entry into the labor market that is based on indicators published in selected recent national publications from 16 European countries.) (MN)

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The transition from the educational system to working life

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Use of national statistics

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The transition from the educational system to working life

Use of national statistics

Author:
Christine Mainguet ([1])

January 1999

Report on the study conducted for
CEDEFOP — European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training
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of Stavros Stavrou, Deputy Director — CEDEFOP

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PREFACE

At this time of high unemployment, especially among young people, analysis of the steps in the transition between the educational system and working life has become an important field of study. Surveys are being developed, research networks set up, etc. The aim of this report is to arrive at an understanding of the factors that ensure the success of vocational integration and offer protection against unemployment.

Statistical studies on the transition cannot of course, as things now stand, produce clear-cut answers, but what they can do is to state the questions and sometimes challenge received ideas on the prospects offered by the various streams of study.

This report is intended to be a provisional review of the various national surveys existing in Europe, the comparative research conducted as a result, the main variables surveyed, the methodological problems encountered, the principal findings, the questions still unanswered and the hypotheses. It also reviews the national surveys currently gathering information on the transition, the existing research networks, comparative studies and, at the end, an exhaustive bibliography.

For the researcher, then, this report is a sort of interim review, in that it highlights the hypotheses that need to be developed, the improvements to be made to the data-gathering tools, the comparisons and harmonisation that are called for and the variables and indicators needing further investigation.

Stavros Stavrou

Pascaline Descy

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CHAPTER 1.
INTRODUCTION

1. Objective

This report reviews recent publications that draw on statistics on the transition between the educational system and working life, as well as on young people's entry into the working world. The data have been compiled in the European Union Member States in the 1990s. The essential purpose is to describe specific features of national data compilations (methodologies, the themes tackled, etc.) and their contribution to the analysis of transition.

2. National sources of statistical information on the transition between the educational system and working life in Europe. Outline of the report

In essence, our review of the literature has been based on an analysis of *national sources of statistical information other than sources concerned with the common questions of the harmonised European surveys*, and on any use made of these sources in official publications or national research reports or in the course of comparative research.

Over the past few years, several European countries, especially when faced with the scale of youth unemployment, have - out of a desire to evaluate their policies towards youth - set up mechanisms for gathering statistical information on the transition between the educational system and working life. This research, conducted on the initiative of either public-sector authorities or national research institutes, employs various methodologies, including longitudinal analysis.

In *Chapter 2*, we briefly describe the *national sources of statistics* of which we have found mentions in the literature, and make brief comments on the methodologies they use. The lines of analysis and a few findings of particular note are summarised. A review of the indicators for young people coming onto the labour market, taken from national brochures outlining the important aspects of national educational systems, is provided as an annex.

The review essentially concerns the transition between the educational system and the labour market, but other aspects of transition (starting up a family or setting up home, etc.) are also touched on.

In view of Cedefop's medium-term priorities, we are particularly interested in the impact of educational systems and initial vocational training on the transition.

We have then attempted, in *Chapter 3*, to clarify the lines of analysis and methodology on the one hand and, on the other, to analyse the findings of certain *comparative research* projects based on national sources, focusing on the work done within the networks of European researchers in the 1990s.

The difficulties encountered by these teams will be discussed, as will the efforts made to generate comparable databases.

The data from *harmonised European surveys* (Labour Force Surveys, European Community Household Panel, and Eurobarometer) are used in certain national publications in order to place the national findings in perspective. Research teams have also made use of these sources for comparative research covering dimensions other than those customarily highlighted in EUROSTAT or OECD publications. Some of the research projects are briefly mentioned in *Chapter 4*.

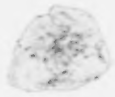
Chapter 5 describes some of the conclusions and the prospects emerging from this review of the literature (cut-off date: April 1998).

The list of sources consulted is annexed to the report.

The author would like to express particular thanks for their help in accumulating the body of documents and for their advice to: Pascaline Descy (Cedefop - Thessaloniki), Laurent Freysson (EUROSTAT - Luxembourg), Michèle Mansuy (CEREQ - Marseilles) and Damian Hannan (ESRI - Dublin).

CHAPTER 2

NATIONAL STATISTICS ON TRANSITION



The statistics on the transition between the educational system and working life that have been compiled in European countries cover a broad range of variables, sometimes in great detail. These data have been obtained by various methods.

By way of an introduction, we shall comment on a survey of indicators taken from national publications on the transition between the educational system and working life, which help to give a general picture of national educational systems.

We shall then discuss the data sources, methodologies, main variables and certain lines of analysis in the national data compilations, highlighting some of the findings.

1. National indicators

Some of the official publications of the Education or Employment Ministries of several European countries have been scanned to find indicators on the status of young people leaving the educational system and entering the labour market. The findings are set out as an annex. This summary - which is not exhaustive - has been confined to documents in wide circulation that contain key indicators on the system as a whole. In this brief general review, we have not drawn on statistical yearbooks or documents that cover only one level of education. Research reports centred on the transition will be presented later.

From this preliminary analysis, it is apparent that information on the occupational progress of school-leavers and those emerging from initial training is only sparsely covered in statistical publications giving an overview of educational and training systems. Most of the indicators published at national level are on enrolled pupils and students, teaching staff and establishments, spending on education, etc.

Certain statistics on school-leavers are calculated in most countries: trends in the extension in schooling beyond the minimum school-leaving age, the percentage of young people participating in certain continuing training initiatives, the number of diplomas awarded per year and by category of diploma (including apprenticeship certifications), the number of those leaving the educational system without a diploma at the minimum school-leaving age, etc. Some publications emphasise the diploma-holders or those emerging from secondary education (general and vocational), while others develop their analysis mainly as regards diploma-holders from the different streams of higher education.

Other information is less common. Certain indicators relate to the educational route: school education after the minimum leaving age, broken down according to the compulsory education streams, the period elapsing before entering higher education, the average age of obtaining a diploma and the average age at which studies are completed.

Some of the indicators relate to pupils' achievements: trends in the level of education, the marks obtained in final examinations or disparities recorded in the diplomas obtained (level of training of young people emerging from initial training broken down by social origin, etc.).

One last category of indicators focuses more directly on young people's entry into the working world: employment or unemployment rates by category of diploma, by the time

elapsing after completion of studies, differences in access to certain types of occupation depending on the diploma obtained, young people's earnings broken down by their diplomas, participation in integration measures, vocational status by social origin, etc.

This rapid review drawn from official publications is indicative of the interest shown in data on the transition between the educational system and working life. The indicators available mainly present immediate findings (the diplomas obtained and to a lesser extent the level of skills acquired), but have little to say on career paths, education or continuing training or the status of young people over the medium term. Is it really an objective of educational systems to promote young people's entry into the working world? This brief review of indicators published by the education authorities seems to indicate that there is little information on this aspect.

The fact that only limited indicators on the transition are published does not necessarily mean that the country has no information. Original data on the occupational outcome for school-leavers may exist without necessarily being included in a general table setting out the key factors in an educational system.

In national publications presenting the main indicators of educational systems, the principal sources used to describe the characteristics of young people entering the working world are the usual statistical publications issued by the Education or Employment Ministries (registers, administrative data, Labour Force Survey, etc.). The findings of surveys on integration or the routes to work are rarely integrated in the statistical publications[1]. Of all the countries whose publications were available to us, the only countries to use certain findings from surveys on integration or the routes to work in publications presenting key indicators for educational systems are French-speaking Belgium, France and The Netherlands. Indicators constructed from registers are set out in the Swedish publication.

2. National data sources

The table that follows sets out the national sources of data on the transition between the educational system and working life, other than harmonised Community surveys, as found in the literature. It does not include one-off surveys on a specific field of research (for example graphic arts diploma-holders monitored in certain European countries under the FORCE programme, etc.), or a special population group (young immigrants, for example) or an individual educational establishment such as a university[2].

For each source, where the information was accessible we have included not only the name of the body responsible for the survey and/or the commissioning agency, but also a

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1 The findings of surveys on integration or the routes to employment are published elsewhere, in reports highlighting the problems of young people's integration on the labour market, such as the *Bilans annuels Formation-Emploi* in France (which incorporates the results of measures to monitor young people and data from the Employment Survey conducted by the Institut National de la Statistique and des Studies Économiques) (see INSEE) or the annual publications of its findings by the *Scottish School Leavers Survey* (see Lynn), etc.

2 For example, see Masjuan, Troiano, Vivas and Zaldivar, 1995, or the research conducted in Belgium by Vanheerswynghels.

little information on the methodology used, the main variables observed, the years in which the information was gathered and a few characteristics of the individuals taken into account, such as the date of completing their studies and the educational level achieved.

Some of these national surveys are used in the comparative research (see Chapter 3) even though they were not intended for this purpose.

Table 1: Sources of recent national statistics on the transition between school/training and working life

Note: this table is based on documents available in April 1998.

Country	Source	Author, commissioning body, etc.	Methodology	Main variables studied	Levels of study (ISCED[3])	Date of compilation	Year of issue	Publications
B	Register of unemployed	Employment and Training bodies for individual Regions (RVA, ONEM, VDAB, FOREM)	Analysis of the register of unemployed	New entries in the Register and outgoing entries, month by month, broken down by field of study, the proportion of those registered after their studies who confirm their registration after the waiting period (9th month), etc.	All levels	Annual compilation	Variable	Service Studies and Statistics du FOREM, 1996 and 1997 Vanhaverbeke et al., 1992, etc.
B	General population census	Institut National de Statistique, Federal Departments of Scientific, Technical and Cultural Affairs	Questionnaire to whole population	Status on the labour market by the time elapsed since obtaining a diploma, field and level of studies, etc.	All levels	1991	Variable	Mainguet & Demeuse, 1998
DK	Registers forming part of the RAS system	Education Ministry, Statistics Denmark	Combination of data from the Register on the level of training of the population and the Register of the active population and unemployment	Status on the labour market in December each year, as a function of the date of obtaining diploma or the date of completion of studies, etc.	All levels	Annual compilation	Variable	Internal survey, INES project, network B, OECD 1992 Danish Ministry of Education, 1996

[3] Here the classification used is UNESCO's International Standard Classification for Education (ISCED 76). UNESCO revised this classification in 1997 (ISCED 97). The national statistical institutes are currently changing over from the former to the latter.

Country	Source	Author, commissioning body, etc.	Methodology	Main variables studied	Levels of study (ISCED)	Date of compilation	Year of issue	Publications
D	Mikrocensus		Survey of 1% of whole population, 25% of the sample being renewed each time	Status on the labour market by the time elapsing since the theoretical date of obtaining diploma, fields of study, earnings, etc.	All levels	Annual compilation from 1985	Variable	Internal survey, INES project, network B, OECD 1992 Rosengren, 1998
D	German general socio-economic Panel (SOID)	German Institute for Economic Research (DIW)	Survey conducted each year on representative sample of 6000 people aged 16 and over	Occupational and regional mobility, studies, employ-ment, earnings, job satisfaction, self-assessment, etc.	All levels	Annual compilation since 1984	Variable	Bowers, 1998 Blanchflower & Freeman, 1996 Rosengren, 1998
D	Surveys on leavers (Hochschulabs olventen, etc.)	Education Ministry	Postal questionnaire sent to higher education diploma-holders	Reconstitution of path month by month over 1 year, occupational status, job stability, continuing training, job-finding strategies, etc.	Different Fachhoch-schulen, University and field of study each year	1989 and 1993	1988, 1992	Internal survey, INES project, network B, OECD 1992 Minks, 1992, 1994, 1996 Holtkamp, Minks & Schaeper, 1997
E								
F	Decentralised surveys on integration Observatoire National des Entrées dans la Vie Active (ONEVA)	Direction de la Programmation et du Développement	Postal questionnaire, annual compilation, representative sample used by CEREQ	Status 7 months after leaving the educational system, can be used at the level of fields of study, local and regional level	2, 3 and apprentice ship	Annual compilation	Each year	Bilan Formation Emploi, Ministry of National Education and Research, 1993

Country	Source	Author, commissioning body, etc.	Methodology	Main variables studied	Levels of study (ISCED)	Date of compilation	Year of issue	Publications
F	Telephone panel	Centre d'Études et de Recherches sur les Qualifications (CEREQ), DARES; Ministère du Travail	Monitoring of cohorts, representative sample, telephone survey (CATI) + postal questionnaire	Monthly calendar over 5 years, participation in public integration measures, types of route to work, analysis of exclusion, stabilisation, personal variables, educational route, family, earnings, etc.	Maximum bac or level 2, 3 (education and apprentice-ship), with or without diploma	Each cohort is surveyed over period of five-consecutive years	1986, 1989 and 1994	Bilans Formation Emploi Bowers, 1998 Mansuy, 1996 and 1998
F	A) National surveys on routes Observatoire National des Entrées dans la Vie active (ONEVA) B) Generation, etc.	Centre d'Études et de Recherches sur les Qualifications (CEREQ)	A) Postal survey, with a new panel starting again every four years 1. higher education leavers, 2. leavers with bac 3. leavers without bac B) New measure, Telephone survey	A) Retrospective questionnaire on the three years after leaving school, status on the labour market, etc. B) Retrospective review of first 5 years of working life, month by month, school route, opinions on the route and the future, particulars of social and family background, etc.	A) 1. 5/6 2. 3 3. 2 B) All levels	1 year, 2 years and 3 years after leaving B) 1997	Every 4 years, variable depending on level of education B) 1992	Bilans Formation Emploi Bowers, 1998 Mansuy, 1998

Country	Source	Author, commissioning body, etc.	Methodology	Main variables studied	Levels of study (ISCED)	Date of compilation	Year of issue	Publications
F	Survey on higher education graduates	Centre d'Etudes et de Recherches sur les Qualifications (CEREQ)	Survey of route taken	Field of studies, occupational route during early years of working life, etc.	5, 6, 7, on sample of doctors in 1997	March 1994 December 1997	1992 1994	Mansuy, 1998
F	Ad hoc survey on those entering apprenticeship	Centre d'Etudes et de Recherches sur les Qualifications (CEREQ)		Training and working conditions, retrospective review of early years, etc.	Apprentice-ship entrants	1996	Entrants in 1992 and 1994	Mansuy, 1998
F	Employment survey	INSEE (Institut National de la Statistique et des Études Économiques)	Survey on a representative sample of whole population; one third of sample renewed each year	Status on the labour market, date of completing initial studies, composite indicator of level of training, further estimate of leavers from 1996, social origin, status on the labour market according to leaving date, estimate of the position of first entrants in recruitment, etc.	All levels	Annual compilation	Variable	Bilan Formation Emploi, 1996 of INSEE, CEREQ and Education Ministry, 1997 Rosengren, 1998
IRL	Annual School Leavers' Survey	ESRI, Irish Department of Education, Department of Labour	Survey of 3% of leavers, based on lists drawn up by schools	Fields of study, school route, scholastic results, continuing training, family background, occupational route during first year, job satisfaction, migration, earnings, strategies, etc.	2, 3	Annual since 1980	Each year since 1979	Hannan, Lamb and al., 1994 Smyth and Surridge, 1995 and 1997 internal survey, INES project, network B, OECD 1992 Murphy and Whelan, 1995

Country	Source	Author, commissioning body, etc.	Methodology	Main variables studied	Levels of study (ISCED)	Date of compilation	Year of issue	Publications
IRL	Follow-up surveys on school leavers	ESRI, Irish Department of Education, Department of Labour, National Power and Training Authority (FAS)	Based on annual survey, interviews, successive cohorts	Occupational route, attitudes, subjective assessment of the quality of studies taken, job stability, continuing training. Migration, job-seeking strategies, earnings, etc.	2, 3	After 2, 5 and 7 years	First group emerging in 1981/82 2nd in 1985/86	Pottier, 1993 Internal survey, INES project, network B, OECD 1992
IRL	First destination of Award recipients in Higher Education	Higher Education Authority	Postal survey in collaboration with educational establishments.	Occupational status, continuing training, etc.	5, 6, 7	1 year after diploma, monitoring project after 5 years	Variable	OECD, 1996 Internal survey, INES project, network B, OECD 1992 Rosengren, 1998
I	EVA	Istituto per lo Sviluppo della Formazione Professionale dei Lavoratori (ISFOL)	National surveys, regional surveys (Southern Italy, for example)	School and occupational route, projects, need for complementary training, participation in political and social life, etc.	6, field of study varies each year	3 years after diploma	1989, 1991, 1992	Pottier, 1993
I	National youth survey	IARD	Surveys on representative samples of 15 to 29-year olds	Living conditions and future prospects: specific subjects, changing in each survey (love and sex, new technologies, etc.)	All levels	1983, 1987, 1992, 1996	Variable	Cavalli A., de Lillo, A. & Buzzi, C., 1997
I	The graduate - employment study	ISTAT	Questionnaire	Occupations, posts occupied, etc.	6, 7	Every 3 years		Rosengren, 1998
L								

Country	Source	Author, commissioning body, etc.	Methodology	Main variables studied	Levels of study (ISCED)	Date of compilation	Year of issue	Publications
NL	Registratie van Uitstroom in Bestemming van Schoolverlaters (RUBS)	DESAN Market Research and University of Maastricht, in collaboration with schools	National postal survey, size varies from year to year	School and occupational route, progress 2½ years after leaving, link between studies and employment, school route before and after leaving secondary education, etc.	2, 3, whether or not successful	Annual compilation since 1988	Each year	Hannan, D., Lamb and al., 1994 internal survey, INES project, network B, OECD 1992 Van Smoorenburg and Van der Velden, 1995
NL	HBO monitor	DESAN Market Research and University of Maastricht, HBO Raad	Postal survey, based on RUBS, subsequent enquiries	Status on the labour market after 1½, 2½ and 3½ years, different questions depending on field of studies. Etc.	3 (HBO)	Variable depending on cohorts	From 1989/90	Ministerie van Onderwijs, 1997
A								
P	Transition school / working life (Percurso escola / vida activa)		Postal survey on diploma-holders	Occupational status, type of employment, continuing training, jobseeking strategies, etc.	2, 3	1993 (project 1997)	1992	Internal survey INES network B, 1992
FI	Registers	Statistics Finland	Combination of data from several sources: population survey, Labour Force Survey, Register of levels of training and diplomas (Register of Completed Education and Degrees), Regional Employment Statistics	Occupational status of leavers, diplomas obtained, occupation at end of year, sector, earnings, No of months in job, unemployed, etc. during first five years	All levels	Annual compilation	Variable	Internal survey, INES project, network B, OECD 1992

Country	Source	Author, commissioning body, etc.	Methodology	Main variables studied	Levels of study (ISCED)	Date of compilation	Year of issue	Publications
S	Survey on entrants on the labour market	Statistics Sweden	Postal survey + interviews (sample)	Field of studies, views on studies and matching of studies to occupation, school and occupational route (quarterly monitoring), continuing training, jobseeking strategies, earnings, nature of job, etc.	Variable	Variable depending on levels and fields	Variable dependin g on levels and fields	Internal survey, INES project, network B, OECD 1992 Oskarsdottir, 1995, Arvemo-Notstrand, 1996
S	Registers	Statistics Sweden	Combination of Registers of persons with jobs, Register of Education and Register of those who have obtained a higher education diploma	Level of education and status on the labour market in November according to the time elapsing since end of compulsory education, obtaining the highest diplomas, according to origin (foreign/Swedish), earnings, sector, etc.	All levels	Annual compilation since 1987	Variable	Statistics Sweden, 1997 Arvemo-Notstrand, 1996
UK (SC)	The Scottish School Leavers Survey (SSLS)	The Scottish Office. Education and Industry Department, Social and Community Planning Research, University of Edinburgh	Postal survey on sample (10%)	Family particulars, school records, absenteeism, attitudes and plans, school performance indicators, experience over 10 months following school-leaving, etc.	2, 3, with or without diploma	Annual compilation since 1993	Each year since 1992	Lynn,1994, 1995, 1996 Hannan, Lamb and al., 1994 Smyth and Surridge, 1995 and 1997

Country	Source	Author, commissioning body, etc.	Methodology	Main variables studied	Levels of study (ISCED)	Date of compilation	Year of issue	Publications
UK (SC)	Scotland Young People - ..years in	The Scottish Office. Education and Industry Department, Social and Community Planning Research, University of Edinburgh	New survey of young people covered by first Leavers Survey New mechanism: age cohorts	Evaluation of the impact of YTS and National Certificate, retrospective questions (April and October), studies, school route, first full-time job, current job, continuing training, jobseeking, family, etc.	2,3 Variable, age cohort: 18-19 in 1995, 16-17 in 1997	1995 1995- 1999 1997 -1999 - 2003	1992, 1993, Variable	Tibbit, 1998
UK (ENG, W)	British Cohort Study (BCS 1970)		Sample of 17 000 people born in the same week, April 1970, surveyed five times	Basic skills, employment, education, family, self-assessment, depression, etc.	All levels	1975, 1980, 1986, 1991	Variable	Bynner, 1994
UK (ENG, W)	Youth Cohort Study (YCS)	Manpower Services Commission, Department of Education and Science, Department of Employment, University of Sheffield	Monitoring of cohorts, questionnaire and size of the sample depending on cohorts	Month by month progress from end of compulsory education, YTS assessment, Training Credits, etc.	Based on year of birth	Since 1985, 3 surveys in 3 years	Variable	OECD, to be issued
UK	British Household Panel Survey (BHPS)	Essex University research unit on micro-social changes	Panel of 10 000 people initially	Number of jobs occupied, return to studies, etc.	All levels	Since 1991	Variable	Blanchflower & Freeman, 1996

Country	Source	Author, commissioning body, etc.	Methodology	Main variables studied	Levels of study (ISCED)	Date of compilation	Year of issue	Publications
CH	Questionnaire on transition from studies to occupation	Association Suisse pour l'Orientation scolaire	Postal survey of university diploma-holders after one and five years (92/93)	Status on the labour market, nature of job, jobseeking strategies, adaptation of curriculum to the labour market, continuing training, etc.	University	Since 1991, every 2 years	Variable	Internal survey, INES project, network B, OECD 1992 Office fédéral de la Statistique
CH	Questionnaire on the transition from education to occupation	Office fédéral de l'Industrie, des Arts et Métiers et du Travail, Division de la Formation professionnelle	Monitoring of diploma-holders from engineering school, higher colleges for executives in economics and administration, higher colleges of social work	Status one year after completing studies, according to educational establishment attended, training route, jobseeking moves, etc.	Higher non-university	Annual compilation	Each year since 1994	Office fédéral de la Statistique
N	Norwegian Youth Survey	Central Bureau of Statistics	Longitudinal research on a representative sample of 2 000 young people aged 17-20 in 1985, postal survey	Adaptation to school, particulars of families, work, adaptation to employment, unemployment, health, etc.	Age group	1985, 1987, 1989, 1993	Variable	Hammer, 1994

Country	Source	Author, commissioning body, etc.	Methodology	Main variables studied	Levels of study (ISCED)	Date of compilation	Year of issue	Publications
N	Registers	Central Bureau of Statistics	Combination of registers: central registers of employers and employees (EER), register of earnings, contributions and charges, register of unemployment (including integration programmes), Norwegian Education register	Reconstruction of routes, levels attained, studies begun and not completed, return to studies, jobs occupied, etc.	All levels	Annual compilation	Variable	Blanchflower & Freeman, 1996
ISL	Cohort of people born in 1969	Social Science Research Institute, University of Iceland	Monitoring of every individual born in Iceland in 1969	School and occupational routes, etc.	All levels	Variable	Variable	Oskarsdottir, 1995

3. Typology of methods used in national transition studies

In transition research, time is a key variable, since what is needed is an account of an ideal process or itinerary.

Two types of methodology are used: once-only information compilation that incorporates retrospective questions, and successive polling.

3.1. Once-only information compilation

3.1.1. Cross-sections

Many of the statistics published on the transition between the educational system and working life are derived from a cross-section reading of data, compiled at a given point, on young people of different ages belonging to the same population.

Diagram 1: Simultaneous cross-section data [a]

Age group	Sample	Date of survey	Variables observed			
A_1	S_1	T_1	V_1	V_2	V_3	..... V_e
A_2	S_2	T_1	V_1	V_2	V_3	..... V_e
..	..	..	..			
..	..	..	..			
..	..	..	..			
A_m	S_m	T_1	V_1	V_2	V_3	..... V_e

[a] Source: von Eye 1985, cited by Keeves, 1988, p. 116.

A comparison is made of the status of young people of different ages questioned at the same time: for example, a census, an ad hoc survey on young people, etc. The data are not sufficient to understand the transition process; they refer to a quite specific point in the economic cycle. For example, if in a given year the unemployment rate for 20- to 24-year olds is higher than for the 25-29 age group, this does not necessarily mean that the status of young people on the labour market improves with age. Young people aged 25-29 may have experienced a lower unemployment rate previously, and their status may therefore have declined. *Cross-section analysis cannot be used to describe a trend or to make a prognosis.*

3.1.2. Retrospective polling

In many surveys, people are asked retrospectively about their status *at a given date* (for example one year before the interview in Labour Force Surveys). This process can be used to elucidate certain changes in status, for example from one occupational status to another, but provides little information on the situation between the two dates (period with a given status, subsequent changes, etc.). Moreover, the data compiled in this manner may lend themselves to misinterpretation, as someone reporting the same status at two different points in his itinerary, such as 'full-time study', may well have experienced other statuses in the interval. For instance, he may have taken advantage of a support measure for jobseekers following a brief period of unemployment.

Such retrospective questions are used, however, for example when using the data from the Labour Force Survey, if specific information is not available on the date of obtaining a diploma or completing studies. Someone who states that he has been a student at time X and who is no longer studying at time X+1 is regarded as being an 'educational system leaver'.

In certain national surveys, young people are asked about the *key dates* in their school and career paths: when they started their first job, for example, the date when their latest job ended, the duration of unemployment, etc. This information can be used to reconstruct their careers. Questions on the *dates of completing studies or obtaining the highest-level diploma are very useful in analysis* as they can be used to compare people of different ages, who are questioned at the same time, according to the time that has elapsed since their education (for example see Mainguet & Demeuse, 1998).

In other research, school routes and the first few years of working life are retraced retrospectively by means of specific *month-by-month (calendar method)* questions, as in the national surveys on itineraries in France and the *Youth Cohort Study* in England and Wales.

In several European countries, this method is also used in surveys that highlight trends in the occupational status of young people in the months after they leave the educational system. Generally, they are surveyed less than a year after leaving. These surveys, essentially conducted in collaboration with educational establishments (which provide a list of their former pupils), cover all school leavers (or diploma-holders only) or a sample: for example the *Hochschulabsolventen* in Germany, the RUBS in The Netherlands, etc.

In other more qualitative research (biographical studies, for example) the person is questioned over a *far longer period of time*. In such cases, the factors put forward by an individual to explain his behaviour patterns should be treated with caution.

3.2. Series of polls

A series of surveys provides an additional opportunity to gauge changes in status. Keeves (1988) in particular makes a distinction between *Trend Studies*, and *Time Series Studies* and panels.

3.2.1. Trend studies and simulated cohorts

In trend studies, the same population categories (for example the 16-19 age group) are polled at regular intervals. Every year or every quarter, new samples from the category being surveyed are asked the same questions. The Community Labour Force Survey or the national surveys on young people in Italy, for example, can be used to analyse changes over a period of years in the status of young people on the labour market (by age group).

Diagram 2: Trend study

Age group	**Sample**	**Date of survey**	**Variables observed**			
A_1	S_1	T_1	V_1	V_2	V_3	..... V_e
A_1	S_2	T_2	V_1	V_2	V_3	..... V_e
..	..	..	..			
..	..	..	..			
..	..	..	..			
A_1	S_m	T_m	V_1	V_2	V_3	..... V_e

Keeves, 1988, p. 116

Some countries also have data from annual surveys conducted on the same population category, such as school leavers, over several consecutive years: *School Leavers Surveys* in Ireland, decentralised studies on job integration in France, the RUBs in The Netherlands, etc.

Simulated cohorts are a variation on trend studies. The behaviour of cohorts can be simulated by relating observations of a sample of people aged Y+1 at time X+1 with the findings of another sample, independent of the first, of people of age Y questioned at time X. Such analysis can be conducted on data from annual surveys on employment, for example.

3.2.2. Time series

In time series, on the other hand, a *cohort* (the same sample of people), is polled on several occasions, sometimes several times a year. To clarify a situation observed at time X+1, the researcher has the information provided by the same individuals at time X. The distortions due to forgetfulness are avoided, and the factors giving rise to change can be better evidenced.

Diagram 3: Time series.

Age groups	**Sample**	**Date of survey**	**Variables observed**			
A_1	S_1	T_1	V_1	V_2	V_3	..... V_e
A_2	S_1	T_2	V_1	V_2	V_3	..... V_e
..	..	..	..			
..	..	..	..			
..	..	..	..			
A_m	S_1	T_m	V_1	V_2	V_3	..... V_e

Keeves, 1988, p. 117

This procedure is applied in certain countries to study trends in certain categories of diploma-holders over the years after a diploma has been obtained, for example, in itinerary studies in France and the HBO Monitor in The Netherlands.

3.2.3. Panels

According to Keeves, panel studies can be used to distinguish between duration-linked effects and effects linked to the current economic situation, by combining the time series approach (successive questioning of the same individuals) and trend studies (questioning of the same category of people at regular intervals). In a panel study, the same group of people is questioned at regular intervals, sometimes several times a year. In addition, at each point in the survey, a new cohort is introduced into the panel.

Diagram 4: Example of panel study: annual monitoring of each cohort of educational system leavers over a period of five years

Year of leaving education	Period elapsed since end of education									
1990	0	1	2	3	4	5				
1991		0	1	2	3	4	5			
1992			0	1	2	3	4	5		
1993				0	1	2	3	4	5	
1994					0	1	2	3	4	5
Date of survey	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999

Panel studies focusing on young people at the end of their education and at the start of their working lives exist in particular in Ireland, in France and in the United Kingdom.

Certain data on the transition between the educational system and working life are derived from panels that are representative of the population as a whole. In these studies, the size of the samples of young people is very often small and the information is available only at a very general level (for example European Community Household Panel national samples).

The use of household panels to study the transition between the educational system and working life can apply only if the young people leaving their original household continue to be surveyed during succeeding sessions. If this is not the case, the loss of people leaving their parents' households is selective; it could be hypothesised that this would be less extensive among less skilled people, especially men, who find it the hardest to enter the labour market and live with their parents for longer. This assumption should be borne in mind if the purpose of analysis is to clarify career paths in relation to previous training paths.

3.3. Registers

Of particular interest in describing the sources of statistical information on the transition between the educational system and working life are *registers*. Especially in the Scandinavian countries (Finland, Denmark, Sweden, Norway), information is obtained on the occupational history of young people by relating several registers: school registers supply the date of obtaining a diploma and the type of diploma, any return to study, etc.; employment registers help to reconstruct careers in great detail (type of job occupied, type of contract, duration, earnings, etc.). In most cases, this information can also be related with family status, particulars of the employer, etc. These very comprehensive databases

can be used to observe phenomena at a very detailed level of breakdown and to compare several successive years as a result of annual updating. (Arvemo-Notstrand, 1996).

The absence of more subjective data (career aspirations and other plans, degree of satisfaction in view of studies, the current situation, etc.) is one of the main limitations of registers.

In Belgium, pending wide-scale surveys on school leavers[4], and bearing in mind the existing limits of the Labour Force Survey questionnaire, the researchers and administration are using the register of unemployed to estimate certain flows in the first few years of working life. This database is somewhat distorted, however, as not all diploma-holders register with the unemployment agency. This depends a good deal on the subject studied and the kind of occupation sought. Higher education diploma-holders are far less well represented, especially in certain fields such as medicine. Unfortunately the database does not shed light on the outcome for those leaving the register (entry into working life, return to study, etc.). However, several indicators are based on this register (see Beguin et al, 1996, successive issues of *Werkzoekende schoolverlaters in Vlaanderen* published by Vlaamse Dienst voor Arbeidsbemiddeling in Beroepsopleiding, Vos et al., 1992, etc.). The Research and Statistics Department of the Office Communautaire et Régional de la Formation Professionnelle et de l'Emploi (FOREM) (1996) in particular has described the four-year trend in the rate of re-registration after a (9 month) waiting period, broken down by type of studies.

4. Variables studied at national level

4.1. Reference frameworks

Most national studies are descriptive. They show the status on the labour market of leavers from different streams of education and training according to the initial training procedures. These studies are part of the more general framework of the evaluation and *guidance of educational systems*.

Research on the transition between the educational system and working life also forms part of the general framework of *studies on young people*. This field of research has changed a good deal over the past few years (see for example, in the case of France, the review by Rose in 1994). The use of the concept of 'youth' as an empirical or statistical category, for example, has been criticised on many occasions. It tends to accentuate the internal consistency of the group being studied, whereas all studies, especially those on transition, highlight its heterogeneous nature.

[4] Surveys have, however, been conducted in certain areas and for specific categories of diploma-holders or school-leavers (see Vanheerswynghels)

One objective of research that is frequently advanced is the identification of *groups at risk* (see 4.2.1) and the evaluation, at individual level, of the effectiveness of the actions conducted by each national partner to improve the conditions for youth integration.

The indicators most commonly used now emphasise the *difficulties of integration*, more specifically youth unemployment.

One of the main difficulties of studies on the transition between the educational system and working life is to define the criteria for the successful completion of transition or integration. What is the basis for saying that young people from a given stream are better integrated than others? The reply is somewhat ambiguous and is arrived at in different ways depending on the educational, economic, social or other context. It also depends on the way in which databases are constructed.

The same criteria cannot be used in surveys gathering information in the months immediately after obtaining a diploma and in cohort monitoring studies over several years. Reliable conclusions could hardly be reached on the 'success' of integration on the sole basis of the first few months of working life.

The questions facing young people, their parents and the political authorities cannot be formulated solely in terms of the likelihood of obtaining a job quickly, but extends to other aspects such as job stability, remuneration or degree of satisfaction. There are other points of concern as well: whether the job occupied matches up to a person's studies, promotion prospects, the need for further training to obtain or retain a job, etc. Ideally, the indicators should provide information on all these aspects, but on an instable labour market, where the careers of adults are increasingly punctuated by breaks and deviations, it has probably become almost an impossible task to assess whether a young person has been successfully integrated on the labour market. National statistics do no more than highlight various characteristics of the routes towards integration. Certain researchers propose, for example, to treat stability in a given status, whatever that may be, as the criterion for a young person's integration on the labour market.

The question of the *effectiveness* of training has not been tackled as such in this review of the literature (for a more detailed discussion, see Descy & Wetsphalen, to be published).

4.2. Definitions

This section sets out some of the definitions of terms used in national surveys to illustrate the diversity of approaches rather than to provide a systematic list of all the variations encountered.

4.2.1. Population groups studied

Depending on the sources and countries, people are selected for investigation in different ways. There are four main procedures:

a) In certain surveys, only one *age group* is surveyed, as in the case of the youth surveys in Italy (Cavalli et al, 1997) and the *Norwegian Youth Survey* (Hammer, 1994).

The published statistics usually refer to the under-25s. This cut-off age is being challenged by recent research (for example OECD, 1996), which has demonstrated the greater duration of the transition period or its shift to higher age groups.

b) Most surveys are on what happens to individuals who have *left a given level of studies during the same academic year*. Such surveys are directed at young people who have reached the minimum school-leaving age, those who have completed a secondary education cycle, new higher education diploma-holders, etc.

Usually the sampling procedures are such as to make distinctions, within a representative sample, between training levels and types and fields of study. In certain survey measures, some categories of diploma-holders are over-represented in a sample, as when an evaluation is targeted more specifically at young people emerging from the new training streams.

The young people surveyed are not necessarily leaving the education or training system. Some of the surveys mentioned in this review of the literature can be used to find information on the continuation of school education beyond the compulsory period, for example on a part-time basis under an alternance arrangement or in higher education (as in the case of the *School Leaver's Surveys* in Ireland).

The category of 'leavers' is not always the same. In certain surveys, the definition of leavers is restrictive: only those who have reached a given level of studies (for example by passing an exam) are surveyed, as in the case of studies on higher education diploma-holders. Other surveys adopt a broad definition: everyone leaving a given level of studies (for example, those leaving compulsory education) whether or not they have succeeded is included.

'Leavers' are all the more difficult to pinpoint because two patterns of behaviour are commonly observed. Some young people go back to the educational system shortly after first leaving it, while others obtain a first diploma and then continue their studies at the same level without a break (both in secondary and in higher education) to obtain further qualifications.

In France, a further definition of those leaving the educational system and of vocational integration has been applied since the 1996 Employment Review. CEREQ, for example, now uses the '*first-entrant*' (primo entrant) concept to designate young people under 35 who discontinue their studies for the first time for a period of over a year. Breaks for national military service or maternity leave are not taken into account.

c) Other data sources (registers in particular) provide information, at a given point, on *all young people leaving in the same year, at every level and for every type of study*[5]. This is also the case of the 'Generation' surveys in France. The studies

[5] In the Labour Force Surveys, leavers are generally defined as individuals who were full-time students one year before the survey but who are no longer in full-time studies at the time of the survey. This approach raises a problem (for discussion see 3.3.1): according to Berkhout et al (1993), the number of leavers has been under-estimated in

providing the dates of obtaining diplomas[6] can be used to study the inflows of and competition among diploma-holders on the labour market or in access to public employment support measures.

d) In a fourth type of research, young people *'at risk'* are more specifically studied. This category is pre-defined (in the light of school results, area of residence, etc.) or post-defined (in the light of difficulties in integration). The status on the labour market of 'inadequately qualified' young people[7], the target of many measures to promote entry on that market, is highlighted in this manner (see for example the various speakers during the fourth European workshop of the 'Transition in Youth' network, centring on the combating of exclusion, held in Dublin in September 1997).

On the other hand, the fairly significant unemployment rate among young people with the greatest academic capital (*university education diploma-holders*) is a new finding that is of concern to the public-sector authorities in many countries (especially Spain, Italy, Greece and Finland where the unemployment rate is particularly high). Several research projects are designed to shed light on the outcome for graduates (cf., in the case of France, Degenne, Stoeffer-Kern and Werquin, 1998). Special observation schemes have been set up in France to monitor more closely the occupational integration of graduates, who are being found to be increasingly sensitive to economic fluctuations.

e) A final category of studies relates to *entrants in certain training measures*; for example studies on those taking up apprenticeship in France.

4.2.2. Labour market status

Career paths may differ widely and they cannot be analysed merely by estimating unemployment rates in each age group or at a given point after leaving education. National surveys show that there are frequent changes of status, various combinations of studies and employment, a growth in occasional, temporary and part-time jobs, greater involvement in integration measures, non-activity, etc. Information on the type of occupation and on duration of jobs and turnover is also available in certain countries.

In evaluating national policies, the status of young people on the labour market is *generally defined in the light of national criteria* (for example by the different categories of unemployed people or the beneficiaries of work integration measures), and these are more detailed than the categories used in international classifications. Employment, unemployment, non-activity, etc., are considered in the countries' socio-economic, socio-cultural and historic context. At a more detailed level, the nomenclature of occupations also varies a good deal from country to country.

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the Labour Force Surveys compared with the school statistics, at every level of study and more specifically for university leavers

6 In the German Mikrocensus, people are selected not by the actual date of obtaining a diploma but by the theoretical age at which a diploma is normally obtained.

7 This category is very hard to define in a national context, and all the more so in comparative research. A European comparative study conducted under the SOCRATES programme in 13 countries on 'reforms of training measures to combat school and social failure in Europe, 1985-1995' has concluded that there is a wide diversity in the definition of and accounting for young 'educational failures' (Casal, Garcia, Planas, 1998)

In research dating fairly far back, which we cite here for its methodological interest, Viney (1983) has shown that one cannot rely solely on the opinions of the people being questioned as to the relative stability of their jobs. Of those who stated that the jobs they occupied nine months after leaving the education system were permanent, only, 51% were found to be in the same jobs when they were surveyed again four years later. On the other hand, of those stating in the first few months after their entry onto the labour market that they were in a non-permanent job, only 69% had left that job four years later. *The only way of confirming the actual duration of a job is subsequent polling, or cohort monitoring.*

The particulars of posts occupied by young people need to be interpreted in the global context, with particular regard for the growing proportion of fixed-term jobs in the adult population in general.

During the transition period, young people often experience *mixed situations*. A young person, for instance, may be simultaneously a student and worker, either because he is combining his studies with a part-time student job or because he is going through a training process in which supervised work is combined with training periods, or because he has already embarked on his working life but has resumed part-time studies. Depending on the survey objectives or the way the database is configured, the priority in defining people's status may be their employment or their training. This decision has certain effects on the calculation of traditional indicators such as the unemployment rate. When young people are engaged in alternance training, for example, they are not regarded as in work, and the unemployment rates are higher than if these same young people were numbered as among people having a job. In the same way, the classification of young people doing their civil or military service varies in individual analyses (sometimes they are listed as being in the active population, sometimes among the non-active).

These few instances show the need for greater *caution in using national statistics out of context.*

5. Notable findings of national studies

Once again, it would be impossible to give an exhaustive description here of all the findings accumulated by national statistical studies on the transition between the educational system and working life, or to formulate hypotheses in the light of those findings on any divergences or convergences observed dans EU countries. The findings briefly commented on above show the wide variety of the subjects tackled in those studies conducted according to nationally defined priorities.

5.1. Developments in academic careers

School education is longer. More and more youngsters are obtaining a diploma of upper secondary education or higher education. This prolongation of schooling has not, however, occurred in every country at the same point.

The lengthening of studies does not necessarily imply obtaining a diploma at a higher level. Many young people continue their education in streams at the same level as the one in which they have obtained their first diploma.

Even in short-cycle courses which are designed to prepare people for immediate entry into the labour market, young people are continuing to study in order to improve their qualification (for example, Vanheerswynghels, 1996, in Belgium) or are embarking on continuing training (Statistics Sweden, 1997). In France, due to the lengthening of studies, the number of young people leaving the initial training system each year is lower than might have been predicted in view of the size of generations.

The relative volume of individual streams is changing in different ways from country to country: in Germany, the number of apprentices has decreased since 1995, whereas the number of higher education diploma-holders (universities and *Fachhochschulen*) is rising (*Bundesministerium*, 1997). In France, the proportion of those holding a technological or vocational baccalaureate has been rising, whereas there has been a decline in the number passing the general baccalaureate (Education Ministry, 1996).

In many countries, some young people are still leaving school without a certificate of completion of compulsory education. In Ireland, for example, this proportion is estimated at 5% (Tibbit, 1998).

5.2. Evaluation of skills and recruitment practices

During the transition between the educational system and working life, the *skills acquired during the period of initial training,* as reported by the diploma-holder, are evaluated by the labour market. It is increasingly common for young people coming onto the labour market to hold diplomas, but they come into *competition* with older people who, without having attained the same level of studies, have the advantage of *greater work experience*.

Based on the French Employment Survey, Audier (1995) has studied developments in the recruitment of young people coming directly from the initial training system without a period of unemployment over a decade. He points out that the proportion of young 'school-leavers' - in other words those coming onto the labour market directly after leaving school - is low and declining in recruitment. It is the youngsters with the highest level of diploma who find jobs directly. These are usually posts for executives or middle-ranking occupations in the tertiary sector, in retailing and non-retailing services. The author refutes the argument that youth unemployment may be attributed to the low number of jobs created. His analyses show that the number of recruitments is greater than the outflow from education or training and that

'In recruiting, employers have a margin of choice among different categories of labour depending on the nature of training and experience; the choice between training and experience is not always weighted in favour of young starters, except at the cost of subsequent levels of training. Nevertheless, in certain occupations within particular sectors, they seem to be regarded more favourably.' (p. 13).

Various national studies refer to the way in which the management of labour differs according to *sectors of activity* and the size of enterprises (for example, for France, see Mansuy, 1998, Mallet et al., 1996 or Lochet (1994) for a description of recruitment management profiles in individual sectors according to the findings of pathway surveys).

Also in The Netherlands, the survey data on school-leavers are integrated into the labour market analytical models with the aim of showing the relative importance, in a segmented labour market, of individual characteristics of individuals (the profile of young jobseekers at the time of recruitment from sector to sector) and jobs in the different sectors (Breen et al, 1998). In a preliminary analysis, the authors conclude that specific skills are of great importance in craft trades and in the liberal professions. On the other hand, in what they call the 'general' sector (office jobs, especially in large companies), the level of education is more important than specific skills. Lastly, in the secondary sector, where less skilled people are more likely to find jobs, the level of diplomas and specific skills acquired in the course of studies bear less weight at the time of recruitment.

Beduwé and Espinasse (1995) have considered the impact of diplomas on vocational integration from the historic viewpoint. They take into account three types of phenomena: the reorganisation of the structure of jobs, changes in the content of jobs and changing recruitment practices. Unlike the conventional analyses that focus on trends in demand, they highlight the importance of the growing supply of diploma-holders. In France, '*just knowing the flow of diploma-holders "produced" by the educational system over the past forty years helps to explain - to a very wide extent and on its own - the evolution in the diploma-based structure of occupations* ..' (Beduwé and Espinasse, 1995, p. 8).

Broad-scale national studies do not take into account the evaluation of the *actual competences* of young entrants on the labour market. The estimate is usually based solely on the highest diplomas obtained in the school system or the final year of attendance. In an original piece of research by Bynner (1994), measurements of basic skills (reading, writing and arithmetic) among young people coming on the labour market were related to their status on that market. The research clearly showed the difficulties encountered by people with poor reading and writing skills on a labour market where there is growing competition among diploma-holders. The author describes a cumulative process in which the difficulties associated with an initial lack of skills are subsequently aggravated, and may give rise to depression among young people, especially young women.

The tools used to measure skills[8] are very hard to employ, as they require the researcher to be in the person's home.

Arvemo-Notstrand (1996) proposes an indirect measurement of skills. She provides information for various occupations on the percentage of young people holding a certificate of secondary education who feel that their work matches up to their training, and also the percentage of youngsters stating that they have the training explicitly needed for their occupation. In Sweden, this 'alignment' between studies and occupations is greatest in occupations in the building industry and in health care.

[8] For example those developed under International Adult Literacy Surveys, coordinated by the OECD and Statistique Canada. See, for example, OECD, Développement des Ressources humaines Canada, 1997.

5.3. Disparities between vocational itineraries depending on previous school pathways

Youth unemployment can be found, to varying degrees, in every European country. National studies have highlighted *the influence of school pathways - and above all the fact of not having a diploma - on the routes taken to the working world.* The methods and rates of access to work differ depending on the level of study, and specific subjects at a given level of diploma.

Certain findings can be observed among all categories of diploma-holders in most countries: a longer transition period, later entry onto the labour market, a decline in employment rates, etc. The routes to work, however, are still greatly influenced by previous school progress. In Ireland, for example, the analysis of a series of surveys covering a period of 14 years (from 1980 to 1994) shows that the impact of the level of diplomas on the likelihood of finding a job is increasing (Murphy and Whelan, 1995). In Sweden too, the data have been available for many years, and the analyses show that the trends are long-standing. Arvemo-Notstrand (1996) points out that the time taken by male holders of certificates of upper secondary education to find work (gauged by the time of starting the first job that lasts over six months) is lengthening: from 6 months in 1984 to 18 months at the end of school year 1991/1992. The pattern for young women is different. The rate of integration in the working world is lower in the case of those obtaining their diplomas in 1992 than for those leaving school in 1984, at every point of observation, but the gaps observed between the two cohorts are smaller.

Vanheerswynghels (1998) reports the following observation in Belgium:

'In the final analysis, the question is rather one of different degrees of precariousness among diploma-holders. At one extreme there are the youngsters who have progressed no further than lower secondary education, whose trajectories are not very dynamic and who suffer from long periods of unemployment due to their slow access to employment. At the other, there are those holding academic diplomas in higher education. They have the lowest unemployment rates and are least likely to be in long-term unemployment, but on the other hand none of these young people have found lasting jobs immediately (throughout the observation period) ....' p. 200.

Holders of higher education diplomas are not immune to the risk of unemployment. In general, national studies confirm that the best employment record is to be found among young people who hold upper secondary education diplomas (being better adapted to declining economic conditions (Statistics Sweden, 1997)), with some exceptions. In France, for example, Mallet (1995) has shown that growing proportions of those holding a doctorate do not have a full-time job on completion of their theses.

In Denmark (Ministry of Education, 1996), employment rates four months after obtaining a diploma are lower for young people emerging from the long higher education streams than for those holding certificates of upper secondary vocational education. This has been a consistent finding throughout the period observed (1982 to 1992), despite fluctuations in the economic situation. The statistics established after a year confirm that greater difficulties encountered among those holding certificates of upper secondary vocational education than are encountered by other higher education diploma-holders. This finding is

especially marked for the female population. After five years, however, the employment rates for those holding diplomas from the long higher education streams are among the highest.

This example clearly shows that *the information compiled in the months following emergence from the educational system are not sufficient to evaluate job opportunities*. In general, employment rates are higher when one observes the position five years after the diploma is obtained than in the months after young people leave the educational system. This trend, however, is not observed in all categories of diploma-holders. For less qualified young people, employment rates decline over time (see, for example, the situation in Denmark).

Today even more than in the past, it is hard to make predictions. Researchers are reluctant to venture a prognosis. They mainly try to *model trajectories*, trying to establish proximities, i.e. similarities based, for example, on the probability of moving on from one status to another (Desmarez and Martinez, 1991).

Research conducted in The Netherlands tends to show that the secondary level streams offering the best *chance of employment* are not the same as those leading to *quality jobs* (Van Smoorenburg & van der Velden, 1995). These two researchers have singled out three factors characteristic of the occupational outcome for young people according to the diplomas they obtain: the chances of obtaining a job, the quality of this job (level of earnings, type of contract, whether it matches up to studies, etc.) and the 'structural risk'. This latter dimension refers to the way in which inter-sector mobility varies from one sector to another. The data compiled from monitoring surveys (RUBS) show that the structural risk is the most stable feature: the streams of study provide access to specific sectors of the economy whose specifications do not depend on the length of time in employment. The other two characteristics of jobs occupied by young people change according to the length of time since leaving school. When the researchers look at the relative status of one type of diploma compared with others, they have found changes in the 'likelihood of obtaining a job', but also a measure of stability in the relative listing of diplomas based on the other two criteria.

At a time of generally rising levels of training, one of the most worrying observations is *the widening of the gaps between young people with a greater wealth of school education and those who have not reached upper secondary education* (see, for example Breen, 1995 and Murphy and Wheelan, 1995, for the situation in Ireland; Danish Ministry of Education). Le Roux (1995) has also clearly shown that in France the least qualified young people become more and more disadvantaged (increase in the duration of jobseeking, low-skill, unstable jobs, longer and longer periods of unemployment, etc.).

The prospects for diploma-holders from the vocational streams of secondary education are not the same as those for diploma-holders from the general streams at the same level. In Sweden (Statistics Sweden, 1997), young people who have taken a two-year course in a vocational stream are less likely to find a stable job within the three-year period following the completion of their education than those completing a general stream of the same length. This finding should, however, be treated cautiously, as many young people who

have had a general education prolong their studies and do not come onto the labour market.

There have been other interesting analyses in The Netherlands, where young people preparing for the same occupations were compared in the light of whether they were *enrolled in full-time education or engaged in an alternance work/study project* (van der Velden and Lodder, 1994, drawing on data compiled by the University of Groningen in the late 1980s). The authors observe differences in the first few months following a diploma: young people holding a certificate of full-time education are more mobile than those who have obtained their diploma in an alternance training centre. The researchers explain this finding in part by the fact that a young apprentice has to find an initial placement in the working world before his training begins. This means that he already has a foothold in the labour market, an advantage not shared by a young person who has remained in full-time education.

In the long term (five years), the gaps between diploma-holders in the two types of streams narrow. Young people from full-time education seem to find it easier to adapt. The authors suggest that social origin has some influence in this, in that the two streams in question do not recruit the same categories of young people. It has not been possible, however, to verify this hypothesis.

Most national databases provide information in sufficient detail to permit an analysis by *streams*.

Pottier (1991), for example, has shown that in France the differences found between the occupational route of those holding certificates in exact sciences and those with certificates in natural sciences persist, and are to be found among those emerging from every higher education establishment.

In The Netherlands, the HBO Monitor provides specific information on the positions of diploma-holders in upper vocational education on the labour market, according to the stream attended, a year and a half after the end of studies (Ministerie van Onderwijs, 1998). The following were the widest gaps:

- employment below the level of qualification: 11% of diploma-holders in academic streams, as opposed to 39% of diploma-holders in more socially-oriented;
- employment for which the level of diploma is required: 62% of diploma-holders in agricultural streams, compared with 92% of diploma-holders in the health sector;
- jobs under indefinite contracts ('*vast*'): 45% of diploma-holders in agricultural streams, compared with 64% of diploma-holders in the health sector.

Other variables linked with the school careers are covered in a few surveys. The analytical model used by Casey and Smith (1995) highlights the long-term (3 years) effect of *school truancy* on integration in the working world. The authors pinpoint the specific effects of absenteeism in contrast with the joint effects of truancy and poor school results.

Research conducted in Spain (Masjuan et al., 1995) has not established a clear link between *the fact of having had a paid job* during university studies and the likelihood of obtaining a job once a diploma has been achieved.

In some cases the data compiled can be used to evaluate *the impact of employment promotion measures* (public-sector policy on support for recruitment, putting young people to work under supervision, additional alternance training, etc.) (for example see Wolfinger, 1996, for Germany, Murphy and Wheelan, 1995, for Ireland).

According to Mansuy (1998), the wide range of public measures to promote employment has not succeeded in reducing youth unemployment in France, although the nature of the measures has changed. The effect on the whole has been to lessen the risk of long-term unemployment rather than to help people to obtain a stable job.

Some authors, however, report that young people do not always have a clear idea of the nature of the measure by which they are covered. Analyses of their replies should, therefore, be treated with caution.

5.4. Disparities ensuing from gender, the age of obtaining a diploma, life plans and social origin

The insertion surveys also help to show the influence of certain characteristics such as *sex* or *the age of obtaining a diploma*. The distinction between men and women is made in almost all studies, and it would be impossible to give a detailed description of all the findings here.

For women, the diploma is generally far more of a differentiating factor than for men (for example, Breen, 1995). Labour market status depends much more on the level of studies for the female than for the male population.

In France, for example (Mansuy, 1998), young women have to face far greater difficulties in accessing employment than do young men. Nevertheless, the overall gap observed between the two sexes is considerably narrower at the higher levels of training.

The author also notes that, for men and women with the same diplomas, the existence of a spouse, his or her occupation, the existence of children, etc. have a very different impact on the initial career of the two sexes.

In their research on itineraries for adults in France, based on the INSEE survey on the living conditions of households, Battagliola et al. (1994) have already shown that later entry onto the labour market delays the age of marriage and the possibility of living independently to a greater extent among men than among women. '*In social environments with fewer financial and cultural resources, family values seem to be more important for women than a hypothetical occupational achievement*' (p. 14). They conclude their report in these words: '*The demarcation between sexes in work and in roles is tending to persist, perhaps even to be reinforced by the employment crisis*'. (p. 15).

Bynner (1994) also reports that in the United Kingdom young unemployed women do housework and look after their children, whereas young unemployed men become more dependent on their parental family, and their unemployment defers the time of setting up as a couple and having children.

In general, the extension of study delays social emancipation (leaving the parental home, marriage, etc.). Some research also shows that *the precariousness of living conditions in general increase, as does dependence on the family* (for example Bordigoni et al., 1994, Battaglia et al., 1994 for France; Cavalli, 1996, Jurado-Guerrero, 1998, for the Mediterranean countries).

The age of obtaining a diploma is a differentiating variable that is used in countries in which it is the practice to repeat school years. The disruption of a school career means that a person enters the labour market at a later date. In Belgium, in secondary education streams in which delayed schooling is frequent, Vanheerswynghels (1996 and 1998) has shown that access to employment is quicker for young people completing their education late than for those completing it by the normal age. The researcher advances a hypothesis that employers see older school-leavers as being more mature. This hypothesis needs to be confirmed by studies on a broader scale.

Analyses by Berkhout et al. (1993) of young people leaving secondary education in The Netherlands in 1992 show that there is a direct link between *ethnic origin* and the time taken to obtain a job, especially among those with certificates of lower vocational education (*Lager Beroepsonderwijs* - LBO) and lower general vocational education (*Middelbaar Algemeen Voortgezet Onderwijs* - MAVO).

In Sweden, on completion of their compulsory education, young people of foreign origin experience lower employment rates and higher unemployment than young Swedes of an equivalent level of education, even though young immigrants are the most likely to attend training programmes for working people (Statistics Sweden, 1997). In this instance, the programmes are probably designed to offset these youngsters' initial disadvantages, especially by language courses.

Furlong (1994), for his part, considers the influence of *opportunities and available resources* in the young person's immediate environment (neighbourhood, family, etc.), and of the *occupational aims* associated with those resources, on young people's entry into the working world in Scotland.

Several surveys investigate the role of the *family environment* (level of education, the parents' position on the labour market, etc.) in the school and working route of young people (see for example Barreiros and Ramprakash (1995) as part of the Sienna group work).

Buccchi (1996) has also shown the advantages to young Italians who can rely on family and personal networks in their search for employment.

The *social environment of origin* continues to influence the careers of young people, even those of equal educational achievement. According to Breen (1995), the differences observed, depending on the social class of origin, in status on the labour market one year after a diploma is obtained can only be minimally explained by the level of education

achieved. He describes the continuing difficulties of youngsters from disadvantaged social classes on the Irish labour market, despite measures to improve their standard of education.

It has also been established that in France (see: l'État de l'école 1997) young people holding higher education diplomas have different types of occupation depending on their social origin.

Several national studies attempt to demonstrate the particular difficulties encountered by young people living in certain less economically advantaged *regions* (for example Italian studies conducted as part of the EVA project (Pottier, 1993), regional studies in France (Education Ministry, 1993), research by Jurado-Guerrero in Spain, research commissioned by the *Anglo German Foundation*, the work of Berckout et al., 1993, in The Netherlands).

6. Conclusions

The findings are that there are great *disparities between Member States in the volume and quality of information available.* In some countries, there have been measures, some of them dating far back, to compile data on the transition between the educational system and working life (some of them were launched in the early 1970s), and these have been developed in the 1980s. Short-term surveys are supplemented by medium- and long-term evaluation measures (this is particularly the case of France, the United Kingdom, Germany, Sweden, etc.). Other countries, on the other hand, do not yet have data on representative samples.

Compilation methods and dates vary from one country to another. Different methodological options have been adopted depending on political priorities, opportunities (whether or not usable registers exist) or budget constraints. The categories used in surveys are constructed with regard to the national context and cannot be directly translated into the categories of National Classifications.

In some cases, the definitions stated in different sources within a given country are not comparable. In the case of Sweden, for example, Arvemo-Notstrand (1996) analyses the concepts of 'paid employment' and 'university student', which differ in individual registers and in questionnaire-based surveys of leavers.

The most useful data are from surveys of school and career progress and integration, especially of panels. These various measures can be used to conduct longitudinal analysis. Other surveys that are more ad hoc in nature, conducted by research teams, nonetheless help to highlight or explain special national features or to test the relationships between variables.

The national statistics could be used more specifically to illustrate certain aspects of the transition process not yet covered by the EUROSTAT harmonised data:

- the time dimension of the process of integration, as evidenced at decision-making points or changes in status, etc.;

- detailed information by fields of study, a comparison of the relative advantages of certain stream by comparison, for example, with the national average, etc.;
- subjective variables: aspirations, projects, degree of satisfaction, perception of one's status in the transition from education to employment, etc.;
- regional or local contexts;
- elements of evaluation of the impact of national measures to promote integration and guidance.

In this review of the literature we have described some of the findings that are currently available.

This review of national sources and the use made of them in official statistics needs to be updated and supplemented with the help of national experts. National data compilation structures are in fact evolving, especially to take account of changes introduced in training measures, support for recruitment, etc. The needs for information are changing (see for example Mansuy, 1998, Tibbitt, 1998). In addition, as we are about to see in the next chapter, due to the effect in particular of European research programmes certain national methodologies are being adapted to make them comparable with those used in other countries.

CHAPTER 3.

COMPARATIVE RESEARCH BASED ON NATIONAL STATISTICS

For some years now, particularly with the support of European authorities (Cedefop, the European Science Foundation, DG XII, DG XXII, etc.), contacts between researchers and European experts working on the problems of young people in general and the transition to working life in particular have intensified. Several networks have come into being: the European Transitions in Youth network, which has benefited from the support of the *European Science Foundation since 1996*, the 'Educational stratification and vocational destinations' network coordinated by the European University Institute and the University of Mannheim, the Cedefop network on the economics and the sociology of the relation between training and employment, CYRCE (Circle for Youth Research Co-operation in Europe), a non-profit-making association founded in Berlin in 1990 to promote research on childhood and youth, TREU (Task Force for Research on Europe) launched by the Milan research institute, IARD, network B (Education and the labour market) of the project on international educational indicators (INES) under the OECD Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI), the network on 'Continuing one's training' coordinated by BIEF (Bureau d'Ingénierie en Éducation et en formation, of the Catholic University of Louvain) and SPE (Service de Pédagogie expérimentale, University of Liège) under a SOCRATES project, EGRIS (European Group for Integrated Research) coordinated by Tübingen University, the *Anglo-German Foundation* which subsidises teams from the Universities of Bielefeld and Bremen in Germany, and Liverpool and Surrey Universities in the United Kingdom, the NYRI association (Nordic Youth Research Information), the 'Youth and Generation in Europe' group, a member of the European Sociological Association, etc.

Information on these networks can be obtained on the European Commission and Cedefop websites or on the TREU Ulysse (*Understanding Linkages in Youth Studies and Services in the European Scenery*) site, set up in cooperation with CYRCE (see addresses in the bibliography.

1. Projects

The current condition of national statistical databases on the transition between the educational system and working life makes any comparative approach difficult. Several initiatives have been launched to harmonise the data compiled in individual European countries outside the EUROSTAT harmonised surveys, either by organising a further data compilation in the various countries or by combining data that have been collected elsewhere.

Through the European networks, opportunities for exchange among researchers have proliferated and a few comparative research projects using the national surveys or harmonised compilations have come into being. As examples we could mention the CASMIN project (Comparative Analysis of Social Mobility in Industrialised Nations) produced by the 'Educational stratifications and occupational destinations', research on 'Diplomas, Competences and the labour market', coordinated by LIRHE (Interdisciplinary Research Laboratory on Employment and Human Resources of the Toulouse University

of Social Sciences), funded by Cedefop, research by CATEWE (Comparative Analysis of Transition from Education to Work in Europe), funded under European Commission targeted socio-economic research and coordinated by Damian Hannan of the ESRI (Dublin), VTLMT (Vocational Training and Labour Market Transition) research funded under the Leonardo programme - surveys and analysis (deadline: December 1998), the 'Higher Education and Graduate Employment in Europe' project coordinated by the University of Kassel, etc.

Other projects take a micro-economic look at transition: the NEWSKILLS project, coordinated by Hilary Steedman of the London School of Economics, and jointly funded by DG XXII and the programme of targeted socio-economic research, the STT (Schooling, Training and Transition) project, coordinated by Catherine Sofer of the University of Orléans, etc.

Some of the more qualitative research projects are conducted within the framework of Socrates programmes (the section on the Analysis of Questions of common interest), for example Colson et al., 1998, Casal et al., 1998).

Other groups of researchers have engaged in more theoretical and methodological speculation, as in the IDARESA (Integrated Documentation and Retrieval Environment for Statistical Aggregates) project, funded under the Esprit programme by Eurostat and DG V. This project, coordinated by Joanne Lamb of the University of Edinburgh, ends in December 1998.

The CIRETOQ network (Circle for Research and Co-operation in Europe on Trends in Occupation and Qualifications) also publishes interesting data, especially on the youth labour market.

Other work conducted in the light of Eurostat harmonised surveys, are briefly described in Chapter 4.

The findings of most of these projects are not yet available. In some cases, the data are currently being collated.

In the next part of this chapter we shall touch on the methodology, the variables used and the findings of some of the recent comparative research, listed in the following table.

1. METHODOLOGIES

Table 2: Comparative research on the transition between school/training and working life, using national statistical sources.

	Methodology	Main variables studied	Levels of study (ISCED[9]),	Countries concerned	Years of compilation	Year of issue	Publications
Anglo-German Foundation	Qualitative interview, longitudinal monitoring, monitoring of young people from Bremen and Paderborn, matched with British youngsters from four economically contrasting areas: Swindon, Sheffield, Liverpool and Kirkcoldry	Skills acquired through training, work experience, aspirations, attitudes, etc., relationships between the educational systems, the organisation of the labour market, the context and projects and itineraries.	Variables (age groups)	D, UK	Variable	Variable	Heinz, 1993, 1994 Bynner, 1992, Heinz, 1993 Evans and Heinz, 1994 Roberts et al., 1994 Koklyagina, 1995 Bynner and Koklyagina, 1995
CASMIN	Comparison of findings obtained from representative samples of entrants on the labour market	Relationships between diploma and first job, comparative return on diplomas, etc.	All levels	D, F, IRL, I, NL, S, UK(GB), CH; Australia, Japan, Taiwan, United States, Israel	Variable	Variable	Müller & Shavit, 1997

[9] Here the classification used is UNESCO's International Standard Classification for Education (ISCED 76). UNESCO revised this classification in 1997 (ISCED 97). The national statistical institutes are currently changing over from the former to the latter.

	Methodology	Main variables studied	Levels of study (ISCED),	Countries concerned	Years of compilation	Year of issue	Publications
CATEWE	Establishment of database to combine information on leavers from different academic levels (ad hoc surveys, longitudinal and non-longitudinal, or Labour Force Surveys) Time series	Economic and demographic context, working of educational systems, integration process, social characteristics of individuals, etc.		B (Flanders), D, F, IRL, NL, P, S, UK (SC) Every European country for the LFS	Every year		Mansuy, 1998
Furlong & Hammer	Longitudinal surveys	Impact of measures targeting the least skilled young people	2	N, UK(SC)	85-87	16-19 years	Furlong & Hammer, 1995
IARD		Statistics on young people dropping out of secondary school secondary, social characteristics, causes of dropping out, etc.	Secondary	The 15 European countries + N, ISL, Lie			IARD (undated)
IDARESA	Establishing a common reference framework for surveys on secondary school leavers, construction of a model	Data on schooling, diplomas, continuing training, status on the labour market, earnings, habitat, leisure, etc.	Secondary	IRL, NL, UK (SC)		1991	Hannan, Lamb et al., 1994 Lamb et al., 1997, Lamb et al, 1998
LIRHE	Determining the equivalence of macro-economic data from various sources, depending on the country.	Diplomas, skills and the labour market: evolution of structures by diploma and by age of different occupations, etc. National Classifications	All levels	D, E, F, I, NL, UK	approx. 10 year intervals, the years varying from country to country	Variable	Beduwé & Espinasse, 1997 Mallet, 1996

	Methodology	Main variables studied	Levels of study (ISCED),	Countries concerned	Years of compilation	Year of issue	Publications
Paths of the Generation Longitudinal Survey	Use of longitudinal data	Integration, especially by comparison with streams monitored, etc.	Young people aged 16 to 22	UK, Russia and Estonia	1983, 1988, 1992		Koklyagina, 1995 Bynner & Koklyagina, 1995
OECD		Diploma-holders from certain streams of higher education, vocational integration, vertical and horizontal substitution, etc.	Higher	A few OECD countries			OECD, *From higher education to employment*, 1993
OECD	Combination of national surveys on integration or pathways, from registers and Labour Force Surveys	Unemployment rates by the time elapsing since obtaining a diploma (1 year, 5 years)	2, 3, 5, 6	DK, F, E, IRL, FIN, USA, Australia	Generally 1994	Generally-1989 and 1993	OECD, *Education at a glance - Analysis*, 1996
OECD	Combination of national surveys on integration or pathways, from registers and Labour Force Surveys	Unemployment rates by the time elapsing since obtaining a diploma (1 year, 5 years)	2, 3, 5, 6	DK, D, E, F, IRL, I, P, FI, S, UK, CH, USA, CZ, Canada, Australia, Po	Variable	Variable	OECD, *Education at a glance - OECD indicators*, 1997
OECD	Longitudinal and retrospective surveys	Number of jobs occupied	All levels	D(FRG), N, UK(GB), USA, Japan	Variable	Variable	Blanchflower & Freeman in OECD, *Employment prospects*, 1996
OECD	Longitudinal and retrospective surveys	Employment rates and rates of unemployment after 1, 3 and 5 years, by sex, cumulative proportion of time in employment or unemployment according to status in first year, level, etc.	2, 3, 5-6	D, F, IRL, Australia, USA	Variable	Variable	Bowers in OECD *Employment prospects*, 1998

	Methodology	Main variables studied	Levels of study (ISCED),	Countries concerned	Years of compilation	Year of issue	Publications
Oskarsdottir	Surveys on leavers from educational systems	Dropouts, school routes, family characteristics, occupational itineraries. etc.		Fi, S, N, ISL, United States	Variable	Variable	Oskarsdottir, 1995 Oskardottir, Volanen & Jonsdottir, 1997
Smyth & Surridge	Surveys on leavers from educational systems	Status on the labour market, occupation, sector of activity, social class, etc.		IRL, UK (SC)	79-81		Smyth and Surridge, 1995 and 1997
VTLMT	Analysis of data on early leavers from secondary education		2 and -, mainly vocational	F, IRL, NL, UK (SC),			Mansuy, 1998

2. Methodology

By way of conclusion to their review of the literature, published in 1997, Hannan, Raffe and Smyth pointed out that most comparative research covers only a small number of countries. This observation is still true today, although the findings of wider scale projects are starting to be published (Shavit et al., 1998; Beduwe & Espinasse, 1997, etc.).

In many comparisons, *Germany was, in the early 90s, one of the main focuses of analysis because of the special features - and the results - of its initial vocational training system* (Heinz, 1994; Bynner, 1992; Finch et al., 1997). Hannan et al. (1997) point out, on the other hand, that the other countries which have developed alternance training streams (Austria, Denmark Switzerland, etc.) are only rarely touched upon in comparative analyses.

Comparisons along the *North-South axis* are rare. In addition to the wide extent of youth unemployment in Southern European countries revealed by the international organisation (for example OECD, 1996; Eurostat, 1997), other characteristics of these labour markets have been highlighted by researchers: the poor development of vocational training, the frequency of part-time, seasonal and temporary jobs in the informal economy, etc. (Cavalli, 1996).

East-West comparisons have appeared in certain recent projects (Bynner & Koklyagina, 1995; Brauns et al., 1998; Teichler, 1997, etc.)

Certain comparisons go beyond the framework of the European continent (for example OECD, new LIHRE project, etc.).

The comparative research is in most cases based on data gathered separately in each country and combined after the event. National variables are adapted using a conversion formula so that the data can be integrated in a harmonised reference framework (see for example Lamb et al., 1997 (IDARESA); Müller et al., 1997 (CASMIN); Mallet et al., 1996 (Compétences et marché du travail), CATEWE project, etc.).

The *methodological problems* occurring in aggregating findings compiled at more or less the same time but in different cultural contexts and with different objectives have been clearly described, especially in the work of the European network on 'Transition in Youth' (for example Bynner and Chisholm, 1995; Hannan, Raffe & Smyth, 1997) or by researchers comparing the failure rates and the numbers leaving different educational systems without a diploma (for example IARD (undated); Oskarsdottir, 1995). As of this time, few of these problems have been solved, and the *inter-country comparisons based on national statistics, should therefore be treated with caution.*

The review of the literature has essentially been on wide-scale research conducted on national samples. Certain more qualitative research on *small samples* is cited, however, as it helps to formulate certain hypotheses on the interrelations between variables (Heinz, 1994; Bynner & Chisholm, 1995).

3. Variables studied

The principal concepts to be defined in practice relate to the target population and path towards integration (status, qualification of jobs occupied,'end-of-integration', etc.).

3.1. Population groups studied

It is relatively easy to compare *young people of the same age* in different countries, but this does not help us to understand the integration process. Depending on the age at which they start their working life (which varies from country to country, according to educational stream, etc.). people have a more or less extended knowledge of the labour market. *In comparative analyses of pathways it must be possible to take into account the time elapsing between the date of obtaining a diploma - or completion of studies - and integration.*

It is at present *very difficult to arrive at a comparable definition of concepts such as the 'output' from the educational system or apprenticeship, the 'success' of studies or 'leaving without a qualification'* (see also part 2.4 for a discussion of these concepts in the national surveys).

In the comparisons of rates of unemployment one year after leaving the educational system, published by the INES project B network (OECD, 1997), for example, *leavers* are defined as young people who '*at the beginning of a given year were not in education or full-time training and who, during the previous year, had finished their studies at a given level.*'
(p. 291). This definition is unsatisfactory, as in particular it does not specify what is meant by *finishing their studies*. Some countries include in their statistics young people who have left a certain level without a diploma, while others take into account only the status of those who have succeeded. Success (or successful completion) is defined in different ways depending on the country and the cycles studied: passing an exam, a certain number of hours attended, etc.

Furthermore, according to this definition, young people who have returned to and completed full-time studies after a period of work experience are regarded as leavers on a par with those coming onto the labour market for the first time. The information provided by the indicators constructed should be treated with caution (Gensbittel, Mainguet, 1995).

The difficulty of defining the concept of '*young people without adequate qualifications*' is stressed by the researchers, who have attempted to establish a survey of national initiatives in favour of this target group inside and outside the school (see the work of IARD and BIEF/SPE under the SOCRATES programme, in the section on '*Analysis of questions of common interest in educational policies*'). For example, in research conducted by IARD, three types of groups at risk were defined: young people who do not continue with their school education or embark on vocational training after obtaining a certificate of lower secondary education, those who leave education during or on completion of the first post-compulsory school year, and those not obtaining the certificate normally taken at the end of the first cycle of post-compulsory schooling or training.

The research on national initiatives to promote the access of unskilled young people to continuing training measures shows in particular that in Northern European countries a young person may be regarded as 'having no qualification' even if he has obtained a certificate of completion of upper secondary education, if he does not continue his academic career (Colson et al., 1998). The researchers point out that it is hard to arrive at a comparable evaluation of the size of these categories of young people in every Member State (see also Oskardottir, 1995).

The first problem that often faces researchers is how to define comparable *levels of study;* one of their references is the International Standard Classification for Education 1976[10] (ISCED). Certain projects have developed their own classifications (for example, the CASMIN project) which distinguish between levels in general and vocational education (Shavit, Müller et al. 1994)). In comparative research, account has to be taken of the methods of organising streams, for example whether or not there are alternance or non-alternance streams within a given country, the duration of studies, the possibility of studying part-time, etc. The impact of the educational and initial training system on integration cannot be studied without analysing the possible paths and in particular the points at which a choice is made and the alternatives offered during initial training (Durand-Drouhin and Fetsi, 1998). Several research projects also take account of any further training taken on completion of compulsory schooling, for example measures to facilitate the transition to work.

The subjective evaluation by young people (and employers) of the value of a diploma or the social image of a given stream of training (such as apprenticeship) is also covered by certain comparative analyses (for example Bynner, 1992).

3.2. Positions on the labour market

From a macroeconomic viewpoint, successful entry into the working world is increasingly hard to gauge in the light of a single criterion such as obtaining a full-time job on an indefinite contract. In certain studies, other variables are taken into account: the nature of the job held, level of earnings, whether it reflects the person's studies, aspirations and life projects, etc. (Hannan, Raffe, Smyth, 1997).

The analysis of transition cannot be based merely on an evaluation of an end status, or a person's current status at a given point. *Analyses in terms of pathways and series of statuses are more likely to provide information that can be used in the evaluation of policies.* The diversity of statuses in EU Member States and divergences in the classifications used (in particular for occupations), however, complicate such analysis a great deal.

[10] A new Classification was adopted by UNESCO in 1997. It is gradually being applied in the classification of national curricula and diplomas.

4. Some findings

Comparative research is conducted for a dual purpose: on the one hand, to highlight the special features of and differences in the ways in which European countries manage the transition between the educational system and working life, and on the other, to formulate hypotheses on the factors clarifying the processes observed.

As of this time, European research teams have *essentially formulated working hypotheses*[11]. The findings already published are accompanied by methodological comments that clarify the scope. It would be too lengthy to repeat them in detail in the context of this review.

4.1. Disparities by streams of training

The educational and initial training systems have a manifest impact on the way in which transition takes place. According Hannan, Raffe and Smyth (1997), two *dimensions of educational and initial training systems explain much of the differences observed: standardisation and differentiation*. The earlier the choice of a stream of training in an individual's career, the more 'differentiated' is the training system. The more the training procedures are determined at a central level, the more 'standardised' is the system said to be. The educational systems in The Netherlands and Germany are thus regarded as highly differentiated and as highly standardised.

The authors state their hypothesis that in countries where the educational/training system is standardised and differentiated there is a close match between the level of studies (and results obtained in end exams) and the type of employment. In other words, in these countries the type of diploma heavily influences access to employment. In a less standardised and less differentiated system such as the United States and Canada, individual variables (social class, sex, nationality, etc.) will have a greater role in access to employment.

In their theoretical reference framework, the authors also bring in the type of labour market intervention in the educational and training systems, the proportion of higher education diploma-holders, etc.

For the time being, the researchers do not have comparable data to verify these hypotheses.

Other authors describe educational systems by the way in which education and training are organised, more specifically the distribution of students between vocational and general or academic streams[12]. The *relative numbers of diploma-holders from education or vocational training among entrants on the labour market cannot be considered in*

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[11] The study of school/training-to-working life transition is a fast expanding field of research. Fresh findings are constantly being published. The phenomena observed are also evolving. Contact with the research teams would be useful, to find out whether some of the hypotheses set out in the documents consulted for this review of the literature have been verified in the meanwhile.

[12] In these analyses, it would be helpful to distinguish between the proportions of practical training and theoretical training in vocational streams (see, for example, *Key Data on Vocational Training in the European Union*, European Commission, to be published).

isolation from the value attached to diplomas by potential employers. A study by Shavit and Müller et al. (1994) shows that in the three countries surveyed (Israel, Italy and Germany), despite the differences observed in the organisation of initial training, a vocational education diploma secures additional advantages on the labour market (greater likelihood of obtaining a skilled job and lower risk of unemployment) compared with a certificate obtained at the end of compulsory schooling. On the other hand, vocational education reduces the prospects of jobs held in higher social regard.

These effects are more marked in Germany than in the other two countries, and are found with all forms of vocational training, including apprenticeship.

The research coordinated by LIRHE and funded by Cedefop (Mallet et al., 1996; Beduwé & Espinasse, 1997) has arrived at findings that belie the customary views on the adjustments needed to educational and training systems in order to meet employers' needs. In the six countries covered by the research, a *general effect of the provision of training was highlighted:* in most occupations, not just in those presented as demanding skilled personnel, a rise in the average level of qualifications of newly recruited workers was observed. This substitution of diploma-holders for non-diploma-holders has been gradual; there are differences in the rates of substitution depending on the occupations and the countries surveyed. The authors point out in particular that the occupations previously occupied mainly by low-skilled people have 'over-consumed' young people with higher levels of diploma, thus adding to the recruitment difficulties of young people leaving school without adequate qualifications.

In another research project, funded by the 'Anglo-German Foundation' (Bynner, 1992), small groups of young people living in *contrasting economic contexts*, in the United Kingdom and Germany were matched in the light of subjective criteria, in this instance the type of occupation they hoped to work in. The samples were structured in such a way as to achieve a reasonable level of representativeness of four types of path:

- academic schooling and continuation in higher education;
- training for a skilled job (in particular the *Dual system*);
- unstable route, leading to semi-skilled jobs, in particular incorporating *Youth Training Scheme* types of courses;
- no qualification, unemployment or unskilled job.

The choice of route is influenced by the educational stream adopted. *A young person's route also depends on his career plans, and these in turn are affected by the state of the labour market and continuing training opportunities*. In the UK young people hope to obtain a job very quickly and are willing to consider poorly paid work or training, whereas young Germans of the same age tend to look to vocational training. The author points out, however, that the differences between the two types of project are unimportant, as in Germany a person is required to find a work placement before starting his training.

In their analysis, Bynner and Chisholm (1995) also suggest the impact of *socio-cultural and historic factors* in the choice of route and the decisions that young people tend to

make towards the end of their compulsory schooling and throughout the transition process.

In analyses by Heinz (1994), it seems that young people in the UK have a wider choice than do young Germans. In parallel, the author shows that at the age of 18 a Briton may have taken a *Youth Training Scheme*, a post-compulsory school course, have had a short job and have been unemployed for a few months without having, obtained additional qualifications by the end of this time. Such a situation would be almost impossible in Germany.

Depending on the country, the failure to obtain a certificate of completion of compulsory education exposes a person to a varying risk of temporary employment and long-term unemployment. Casal, Marcia and Planas (1998), at the end of their analysis of training measures designed to combat educational and social failure in Europe, have described a twofold paradox: they claim that the relative success of measures introduced in different European countries has helped to reinforce the stigma of school failure and a shift of policies to combat academic failure to outside the school system.

The likelihood of obtaining a skilled job obviously depends on the structure of qualifications of leavers during a given year. The *competition between diploma-holders* can be analysed only in research that takes into account all the diploma-holders in a given year. All other factors being equal, unqualified youngsters are all the less likely to find a job if the numbers on the labour market at the same time are greater.

In their research, Mallet et al. (1996) have shown that the *relationship between earnings and diplomas is becoming blurred,* as diploma-holders do not always find a job matching their qualifications and accept jobs at a lower level. This phenomenon of over-qualification varies, however, from one country to another.

Some authors argue that job prospects are improved if the educational establishments are in frequent contact with entreprises, employers and the social partners in general, for example in order to define objectives and develop vocational training programmes (Lynch et al., 1997), or to improve academic and vocational guidance during education or certify skills.

4.2. Other lines of analysis

Women seem to have more chaotic integration routes: their status changes more frequently than men's, etc. Müller, Shavit and Ucen (1997) have shown that female participation in the active population depends more on *the level and type of diploma obtained* than for men. This ratio is more or less marked depending on the country.

Little comparative research has been done on evaluating the *impact of political measures* on young people's integration. Furlong and Hammer (1995) compare the position of young disadvantaged people aged 17 to 19 in Scotland and Norway, concluding that apart from common factors (extension of schooling), there are still particular differences in careers. The authors attribute the differences observed to the policies conducted in the two countries to support this group at risk: the measures seem to be more effective in Norway

(where youngsters spend more time in the educational system) than in Scotland, where there is still marked discrimination by sex or social origin.

In the same way, Smyth and Surridge (1995) compare, over a period of 10 years, the trends in the status of young people in Scotland and Ireland. They find that the differences between the two countries increase over time, explaining this finding by the differing institutional responses to the rise in youth unemployment from which these two countries suffered during the period. In Ireland, the authorities have tried to delay the time at which young people leave the educational system, in particular by increasing the opportunities for access to higher education, whereas Scotland has placed the emphasis on enhancing the provision of post-school training. The survey findings indicate a higher percentage of young Scots in apprenticeship or training bodies, and a higher percentage of young Irish people coming onto the labour market, with or without jobs.

5. Conclusions

The review of the literature on research on the transition between the educational system and working life has shown the proliferation of measures to develop comparisons among European countries. Several current projects are attempting to solve the methodological problems created in this type of research.

A few interesting findings from national surveys (see 3.4) have supplemented those from harmonised surveys. As the data now stand, it might be of interest to consider the practicability of formulating, on the basis of national statistics, *indicators comparing relative and non-absolute values*, in order to highlight, for example, the relative disadvantages (by country and for a number of dimensions) of women, unskilled people, those living in rural areas, young people from disadvantaged social classes, etc.

L'État de l'école, published in France in 1997 (p. 29), presents an indicator of this type comparing the probability of employment, in 10 countries, of young people aged 25 to 29 years at university level compared with the same age group with a very low level of education. This indicator was constructed on the basis of data from the Labour Force Surveys. Of the countries compared, it is in the United Kingdom that university diploma-holders have a greater advantage in terms of protection against unemployment.

There are major developments in the field of research on the transition between the educational system and working life in Europe. *The participation of networks of researchers building up comparable databases could be invited with a view to the possible production of original data to supplement the harmonised information provided by the Eurostat surveys.*

CHAPTER 4.

HARMONISED EUROPEAN SURVEYS

This review of the literature focuses on national data sources other than the harmonised European surveys. These surveys are, however, often used by researchers and national statistics departments for the purpose of comparison, or for specific items of information they contain. For this reason in this chapter we shall provide a brief review of their use for the analysis of the transition between school, training and working life. We shall then touch on the Labour Force Survey, the European Community Household Panel and the Eurobarometer.

The main source of comparable statistics on the transition between the educational system and working life at present is the *Community Labour Force Survey*. The international organisations in particular draw widely on this survey in reporting on the position of young people (EUROSTAT, 1997; OECD in successive issues of *Education at a glance. OECD indicators, Education at a glance. Analysis, Employment prospects*, etc.).

This survey has been used mainly to describe the status of young people by age group and in different countries, and for successive surveys. Several indicators are published on a recurrent basis. The most common are the rates of participation in education and training, the level of education and the unemployment rate.

The findings are sometimes presented with the stress on the characteristics of educational and initial training systems. For instance, in a diagram comparing youth unemployment rates in the 15-24 age group, in the chapter on the transition from school to working life published by OECD in 1996, countries are listed in four categories according to the type of education they organise. The first criterion distinguishes between countries where more than 50% of pupils are in general education from those where a majority of pupils are in vocational education. The latter is sub-divided into three groups, with the distinction between pupils in apprenticeship programmes, programmes taking place in school and programmes whose methods of organisation are unspecified (OECD, 1996, p. 51).

This type of indicator is hard to interpret, as the unemployment rates are the averages for all the young people in a given country, whatever their level of education and school career. The rates are also established by age group and do not allow for the differing lengths of study from one stream and country to another.

Many of the Labour Force Survey questions help to describe young people's living conditions: co-habitation with their parents or living in an independent household, types of job occupied (part-time, whether or not by choice, fixed-term contract, sector of employment, etc.), long-term unemployment, studies according to the parents' occupation, reasons for seeking another job, etc.

The limits of the existing Labour Force Survey for the purpose of transition studies have, however, been shown by CEREQ in a study carried out under the Leonardo da Vinci programme (in the section on the exchange of comparable data) (CEREQ, 1997; Couppié and Mansuy, 1997). Practical proposals for changes to the existing questionnaire and for producing a specific module to be included in a forthcoming Labour Force Survey were made by the researchers. These proposals will enhance the comparability and scope of the information gathered, by means of harmonised surveys, on the entry into working life of young Europeans.

A number of *researchers* also use the Labour Force Surveys to compare the procedures for transition between the educational system and working life in Europe. The following are some of these projects:

- Beduwé, Espinasse et al. (1995): France, Spain, 1981, 1990.
- Bouder, Mansuy, Werquin (1995): 12 European countries, 1988-1991.
- Brauns, Steinmann et al. (1995): France and the German Federal Republic, 1979 and 1991.
- Brauns, Müller, Steinmann (1998): Germany, France, the United Kingdom and Hungary.
- Freysson (1997 and 1998): 15 European countries.
- Mingione, Contiero (undated): Mediterranean countries.
- Bowers (1998): 14 European countries and the United States.

These research projects tackle a variety of issues:

- Brauns, Müller and Steinmann compare the trends in the positions occupied by diploma-holders from general and vocational streams in a context of a general rise in the number of diploma-holders in four countries.
- The survey data from 1971 and 1991, in France and Germany, have been used by two research teams (Brauns et al. 1995) to describe the factors determining the working activities of men and of women. In particular they show the persistence of a more 'traditional' model of women's work in Germany.
- Community survey data from 1988 to 1991 are used by Bouder, Mansuy and Werquin (1995) to test the hypothesis of a labour market for young people structured by public intervention.
- Freysson (1998), in an article focusing more specifically on exclusion, notes that in the European Union an average of 45% of those in the 15-24 age group have left the education and training system without a certificate of upper secondary education. The author lists the economic sectors in each country that employ low-skilled young people.

A few national or comparative research projects use the *European Community Household Panel* to assess the labour market status of leavers from educational systems (for example, in Spain (OECD, 1996)) or certain more qualitative data (for example, the percentage of 16-to-29 year olds having a job and who feel that they could occupy a more highly skilled post (Eurostat, 1997, p. 57)). For the time being, the comparable information on the earnings of young people is also derived from the Community Panel (see Eurostat 1997, p. 58). Nevertheless, the sampling base for this Panel is not such as to achieve sufficient representativeness in describing the transition from school to training to working life in detail. By combining several years' data, duration-linked effects could be brought out, but not the effects of the economic situation.

A detailed analysis of the possibility of using the European Panel for research on transition is presented by Barailler et al., 1998.

The *Eurobarometer* is also used, in particular in the recent Eurostat publication (1997) on young people: opinions on 'living together without being married' (p. 71), centres of interest (p. 100), etc.

Lastly, we should cite an interesting finding derived from data from the '*International Adult Literacy Survey*' (IALS), in which several European countries took part. One of the indicators published in 1997 (OECD, Développement de ressources humaines Canada, p. 57), looks at the influence of work experience on earnings, compared with the respective effects of school education and standards of literacy[13] in 1994-1995, in the 16-25 age group. The findings tend to show that employers choose recruits mainly in the light of their diplomas, although there are national differences.

The IALS survey also provides information on the basic skills of young people coming onto the labour market, depending on whether or not they have a certificate of completion of secondary education (OECD, op. cit., p. 72).

[13] Literacy here means basic reading and writing skills.

CHAPTER 5.

CONCLUSIONS AND THE OUTLOOK

This review of the European literature has attempted to present the national sources of statistics on the transition between the educational system and working life, other than the Eurostat harmonised surveys. It has also discussed the variables and new lines of analysis that can be used in the analysis of transition in Europe.

The national surveys do not yet provide comparable information on every European country. They can, however, be used in international comparisons to describe and explain the institutional features of Member States, and to compare integration procedures and routes.

1. Using the national pathway or integration surveys, panels and registers to describe and explain the special features of Member States

This report gives an idea of the *proliferation of research in EU Member States*[14]. Taking different routes, several bodies wish to have reliable information on what happens to young people on the labour market. It is a paradox that the dissemination of *findings from such research is still low,* especially in the publications reporting the main indicators of educational systems (see section 1 in chapter 2). Only limited use is made of the findings in international publications as things now stand.

Several findings highlighted in this review of the literature (see section 5 in chapter 2) could, however, be incorporated in a comparative analysis of the vocational integration routes of young people. Some of the data help to *describe* the institutional features and the geographical, social, institutional and other contexts for young people's entry into the working world. The national statistics could be used, for example, to *supplement and explain* some of the findings of harmonised European surveys. Some of the courses provide very detailed information on certain streams of training, occupations, regions, etc. Micro-economic or more qualitative analyses are also available.

2. Using national statistical bases for comparative purposes

As they now stand, national statistical bases should be *used with care for the purpose of comparison*. It is a tricky operation to match data that have been compiled separately. There are various initiatives designed to harmonise some of the data (see section 2, Chapter 3). Some interesting results are being achieved (see section 3, Chapter 3), and some of them could be written up in a European publication, although the data are not at present available for every country.

The values of certain indicators observed at national level (for example the number of months' unemployment over a given period) would be unsuitable for use in their raw state in international comparisons, as periods and definitions of status are not normally

[14] The range of sources available was determined in April 1998, and needs to be updated on a regular basis.

equivalent. On the other hand, *the values observed could be used to calculate a relative indicator*. For example, the discrepancy between the duration of male and female unemployment in a given country could be observed to the equivalent ratio in other national contexts.

Where several variables are available, composite scores could be worked out in the same way to shed light on the relative difficulty of entering the working world (Gensbittel & Mainguet, 1995).

3. Encouraging the participation of networks working in the field of transition at European level to produce original data

Many publications report on plans for the harmonisation of existing data or new data compilations using comparable methodologies in several countries.

Certain research teams attempting to develop comparable databases benefit from European funding, following the example of the CATEWE projects and the networks funded by Cedefop. The publication of the indicators produced by these times in European reference documents should be encouraged to optimise the use of the research work and encourage participation by other countries.

4. Selecting priority themes

Very many themes are currently being tackled in national publications. To conclude this review of the literature, we propose a selection of subjects for which findings are already available on certain countries, but which need to be analysed with a view to comparisons. The data available are not yet such as to lend themselves to direct comparative analysis.

a) A consensus is emerging among various authors (in particular Vincens, 1997; Hannan, Raffe and Smyth, 1997, etc.) on recommending the use of data derived from longitudinal surveys in constructing new indicators incorporating the *time dimension* into the analysis of the transition between the educational system and working life in Europe. Longitudinal databases may serve in *describing training and integration pathways*.

   Data of this type supplement the analyses currently being conducted in the light of harmonised Eurostat surveys which provide information at a given point (generally on the status of young people one year after leaving the educational system), but do not take account of the different states in the process.

   The analysis of the transition process should not be confined to data compiled in the months following school-leaving or the obtaining of diplomas. *National statistics are the only sources that can provide medium-term information on the position of young people on the labour market*, for example five years after they have left the educational system.

One of the trickier points in such analyses is the choice of criteria for describing *successful integration in work*. Views diverge on this subject, and further thought should be given to the matter.

b) Among the factors explaining the special features of transition between the educational system and working life, the method of organising *educational and initial vocational training systems*, in particular alternance training, plays a major role. One of the priorities to be tackled is to look at the methods of transition of young education or training leavers and comparing them with those for youngsters leaving academic or general streams (the likelihood of access to further training, the type of job occupied, etc.). The career paths taken by young people from education and training should be described in greater detail, for example differentiating between the fields of training.

c) An understanding of young people's entry into the working world cannot be dissociated from a more global analysis of *inter-generation matches*. When comparing the stages and results of transition between the educational system and working life, the characteristics of the educational and training systems should be considered, in parallel with the methods of organisation of the labour market (its segmentation in particular), the policies introduced by the authorities, the role of the social partners and *employers' practices*: recruitment criteria, promotion procedures, the opportunities for internal training, etc.[15]

d) The new indicators produced could be taken into account in a broader discussion on *fairness*. Several research projects have reported on a widening gap between the more highly qualified young people and those leaving school without qualifications. This hypothesis should be tested with a view to comparisons.

Some of the national indicators show *the impact of the social environment* on diplomas obtained. Similarly, it would be of interest to try to develop comparable indicators on the impact of the social environment on occupational pathways (the means used to seek a job, life plans, etc.).

e) The *evaluation of national policies*, conducted at both microeconomic and macroeconomic levels, could be discussed with a view to comparisons. EU Member States have adopted many measures over the past few years to combat youth unemployment or facilitate the integration of unemployed youth. These measures have several aims, including that of raising the level of qualification and the chances of finding jobs during the period of initial training, improving vocational guidance by identifying individual needs more clearly, facilitating the

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[15] Various items of information should be provided in support of the statistics so that they can more easily be understood and analysed:
- the conditions of entry in higher education, financial support for students (see for example the next thematic issue of *Key Data on Education in the European Union*);
- the possibility of certification outside initial training, methods of validating skills, etc.
- any military obligations (duration, possible deferral and dispensation, etc.);
- conditions for allowances for unemployed youngsters (conditions for access to allowances, their relative amount, waiting period, the duration for which allowances are paid, whether unemployed people can continue their studies, etc.);
- the possibility of doing a part-time job while a student (see also Bennett, 1995, Heinz, 1994).

employment of young people by means of tax incentives, creating more opportunities for continuing training (in particular for the less qualified young people) and establishing 'springboard jobs'.

At the Extraordinary European Council on Employment (Luxembourg, November 1997), the Member States reaffirmed their will to continue their policies along such lines:

'... The Member States will ensure that every unemployed young person is offered a new start before reaching six months' unemployment in the form of training, retraining, work practice, a job or other employability measure.' (p. 16).

The national surveys gather information that can be used to assess the impact of some of those measures. In particular they compile data on the routes taken by young people who have benefited from such measures and on the various devices used. In a European publication, these assessments could supplement a concise presentation of different national measures. The ways and means of transferability should be discussed.

f) The e*valuation of the actual competences* of young people coming onto the labour market (not just mere measurements based on the diploma obtained or the last year of studies attended) is another challenge for future research work. This could take advantage of the impetus generated by European measures to promote *the recognition of qualifications* acquired outside the school setting, in particular by means of a competences map (see the work by Cedefop on this subject and the European Commission's White Paper, *Teaching and learning - Towards a learning society*). This analysis, which should take account of an estimate of 'horizontal' competences (self-image, working methods, etc.)[16], could be incorporated into a discussion of the respective value of diplomas and work experience at the time of recruitment.

g) Finally, we feel we could rely on the experience of Member States in continuing to adapt the *European tools of harmonised compilation* to the changing needs for information. Innovations have already been introduced into the Education/Training module of harmonised surveys (by including a question on the date of obtaining the highest level diploma, in particular). Other adjustments could be considered (for example, improving the reliability of data that call upon memory in reconstructing a pathway) in the light of analyses already conducted nationally.

[16] The OECD PISA project, which in 2000 will evaluate the achievements of 15-year-old pupils, will supplement this type of measure by an assessment of reading, maths and science skills.

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ANNEX

young people's entry on the labour market

review of Indicators in some recent official national publications

BELGIUM (Flemish Community)

In *Vlaams Onderwijs in Cijfers*, published by the Flemish Community's Onderwijs Department, no information on diploma-holders or on vocational integration.

BELGIUM (French Community)

The first two editions of the *Table de bord de l'enseignement (No 0: Premiers éléments and No 1: Indicateurs statistiques)* published by the Ministry of Education, Research and Training each contain indicators on the status of young people leaving education.:

- Structure of diplomas of higher education and labour market trends (89-91), page 30, No 0 (this indicator in fact only represents the number of diploma-holders in different streams).
- Trends in the status of young diploma-holders at the end of qualifying secondary vocational and technical education (month by month, from September 1991 to September 1992, in Walloon Barbing and the region of Charleroi) (page 28, No 0).
- School attendance rate by age in full-time education (No 1, page 10) and trends over fifteen years (No 1, page 12).
- Trends in the proportion of secondary education diploma-holders (88 to 92) (No 1, page 32).
- Trends on the labour market for young university graduates (No 1, page 36). In the absence of longitudinal data on entry into the working world, an original indicator is proposed: the number of fully unemployed graduates aged 36 or under receiving allowances at the end of June 1994 is compared with the number of those obtaining a university diploma over the previous five years (the length of the period taken into account varies according to the length of studies).

DENMARK

In *Facts and Figures. Education Indicators Denmark 1996* published by the Danish Education Ministry in 1996,

- Comparison of earnings in the 15-29 age group according to whether or not its members are studying (+ amount of loans). 1984 to 1992 (page 40).
- Trend, since the early 1980s, in the number of diploma-holders by their level of studies (page 75) and in the average duration of studies by sex (page 79).
- Trend, since 82/83, in the average waiting time between obtaining a diploma and the start of the next cycle, by the type of diploma obtained (page 81).
- Trend, since the early 80s, in the proportion of diploma-holders having a job four months after obtaining a diploma, by type of diploma obtained (page 91).
- Position on the labour market in 1992, one year and five years after obtaining a diploma, by type of diploma obtained (page 92).

GERMANY

The *Numerical Barometer 1997/1998* published in 1997 by the Federal Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Technology: some of the indicators concern young people leaving the educational system. These indicators are generally provided over a period of 16 years:

- Number of diploma-holders in the major categories of higher education, (including the percentage of women) (page 37) and the outlook up to 2015 (page 31).
- Average duration of studies and age at the time of end-of-studies examination in the major categories of higher education (page 38).
- Number of leavers from secondary education establishments (by the diploma obtained and by sex) and number of leavers without a diploma from the *Hauptschulen* (lower secondary schools) (page 24).

and also in the Federal Ministry's *Basic and Structural data 1997/98*:

- Number of apprentices who have passed the qualifying examination, by sector, sex and *Land*, since 1960 (pages 66 to 69).
- Indications of the prior school routes of apprentices (page 65) and higher education students, by sex (page 84); of the age of obtaining the certificate of access to higher education (*Hochschulreife*) (page 86); and of the institution awarding this certificate (page 91).
- Number of young people obtaining the certificate of access to higher education (*Hochschulreife*) and number of years elapsing before they actually enter higher education (page 88).

- Number of higher education diploma-holders, since the 1960s, by sex and by type of diploma (page 96), by fields of study (page 98) and by *Land* (page 100) with predictions up to 2015 (pages 80).
- Trend in the duration of higher studies since 1981 (page 108).

GREECE

SPAIN

FRANCE

In *L'État de l'école. 30 indicateurs sur le système éducatif,* published in October 1997 by the National Ministry for Research and Technology,

- Trend in the general raw level of conscripts since 1971, by school level (page 22).
- Trend in numbers and breakdown of leavers from initial training since 1977, by the type of diploma obtained (page 24).
- Level of training of young leavers from initial training, depending on their social origin (page 26).
- Trend, since the early 1970s, in the unemployment rate and proportion of unemployed in the under-25 age group, by level of diploma, trend in the additional chances of obtaining a job compared with a young person without a diploma for various categories of diploma-holders aged under 25 and for university students aged 25 to 29 (international comparison), by the time elapsing since leaving the educational system (page 28) (source: Employment Survey).
- Relationship between declared earnings by the diploma and earnings of non-diploma-holders at the start of their careers, by sex and type of diploma obtained; declared monthly earnings (full-time employees), by age and diploma (page 30) (source: Employment Survey).
- Trend, in the 1990s, in the rate of access to higher and middle-ranking occupations among young working people with higher education diplomas, by their diploma and sex; the status of young working people with higher education diplomas who have recently left their initial training (over the last two to nine years), by sex and social environment (page 33) (source: Employment Survey).
- Proportion of young people in employment, by their diploma and the time elapsing since the end of their initial training (average over several years); the status, by the diploma held, of young people who have left initial training in the past four,five and six years; the proportion of those in posts as executive, teacher, middle-ranking or in independent occupations or a profession (pages 52 and 64) (source: Employment Survey).

La géographie de l'école 1996 presents indicators by region:

- Proportion of 16-24 year-olds who are unemployed, trend from 1992 to 1995, without indicating the level of training (page 12).
- Proportion of 15-24 year-olds in education in 1968 and 1990 (page 16).
- New apprenticeship contracts and alternance contracts in 1994 (page 70).
- General level of conscripts, comparison between 1981 and 1994, gaps between the findings observed and predicted (page 80).
- Percentage of young secondary education leavers in 1993, without qualifications, at the CAP/BEP level and at the BAC level (page 82).
- Young people's status 7 months after leaving the educational system (unemployment on 1 February 1994, by the secondary education diploma obtained, (page 88).

In *Repères et références statistiquess sur les enseignements and la formation 1996*

- Leavers from the educational system, by diploma and level of training (page 198).
- Trend in occupational status shortly after the end of initial studies in 1991, 1994 and 1995, by the period elapsing since the end of initial training: young people without diplomas, with the CAP/BEP, with the BAC or with a higher education diploma, leaving in the previous 1-4 years, 5-10 years and 11-31 years (page 202).
- Occupational status in March 1995 of young people who have left the educational system in the previous five to 10 years, by diploma and occupational status: middle-ranking executives and the self-employed, white- and blue-collar workers, the unemployed, and the non-active (page 202).

IRELAND

In the *Statistical Report 1995/1996* published by the Irish Department of Education:

- Number of people obtaining the Leaving Certificate by level of diploma, grade and subjects (1996 findings), pages 97 to 108.

ITALY

LUXEMBOURG

In the booklet entitled *Demain l'école. Le système éducatif luxembourgeois face au changement. Luxembourg* published by the Education Ministry, the only indicators refer to the proportion of diploma-holders in different streams, the proportion obtaining diplomas, and the proportion of young people leaving the school system with a qualification recognised on the labour market (pages 59 to 61).

NETHERLANDS

In *Onderwijs Cultuur in Wetenschappen in kerncijfers, 1998* published by the Dutch Education Ministry:

- Trend in the number of diploma-holders and leavers from full-time education without a diploma, by streams (92/93 to 95/96) (page 13), pages 55, 65, 75.
- School routes and education leavers, by streams (page 15); diplomas by streams (page 45).
- Employment and unemployment of diploma-holders from higher vocational education, one and a half years after completion of studies, young leavers in 1989/90 to 1993/94 (page 71) (source HBO monitor).
- Average duration of scientific studies (page 77).
- Types of financial aid and costs of studies by type of education (pages 82 to 91).

AUSTRIA

In *Indikatoren zum Bildungssystem* published by Günter Haider:

- Proportion of higher education diploma-holders (page 170 and 172);
- Breakdown of final examination marks by streams (page 168);
- University successes and failures by level of studies and father's occupation (page 178);
- Failures and drop-outs by sex, streams, in 89/90 and 93/94 (page 83);.
- Youth unemployment rates, by age and sex (international comparisons, page 29), by type of diploma and sex.

PORTUGAL

In *Système éducatif portugais. Situation et Tendances 1992* published by the Ministério da Educação, Departamento of Programação e Gestão Financiera:

- Trend in the number of higher education diploma-holders, 1987/88 to 1991/92, by branches of education and by sex (pages 77 to 79).

FINLAND

In *Finnish Education in Focus. Statistics on Education and Students in Finland 1997* published by the National Board of Education,

- Trend in the number of unemployed under 25 and the number of young long-term unemployed (1991-95), without indicating the level of diploma obtained (page 18).
- Comparison of the number of diplomas obtained in the secondary education and in vocational training, by streams and fields of study, in 1993 and 1995 (page 36); unqualified leavers (page 38).

In *Education in Finland 1994* published by Statistics Finland:

- Educational level attained by young people in 1995, by level of parents' diploma (page 32).
- Trend in secondary education dropouts between 1985 and 1992, by streams (page 33).
- Number of diploma-holders, percentage of women and average age of completion of studies (pages 34 to 40).
- Main activity in 1990 and unemployment in 1992 among those obtaining diplomas in 1985 (page 65).

SWEDEN

In *Education in Sweden*, published in 1997 by Statistics Sweden:

- Number of individuals by level of education attained, by birth year, for the total population aged over 16 (page 5) and more detailed analysis of reasons for not obtaining the school-leaving certificate (page 21).
- Global score for upper secondary education leavers, by sex and type of course of studies taken (page 30).
- Trend in the number of young people completing upper secondary education, by the type of course of studies taken (page 32).
- Percentage of young people who have begun higher education in the three-year period following the school-leaving certificate, by the type of studies previously taken (page 34).
- Number of university diploma-holders by sex, trend over past century (page 39), by fields of study and by sex in 95/96 (page 49), and by the time taken to complete studies by sex (page 50).
- Percentage of men and women having a paid job one year after obtaining a diploma (diploma-holders from upper secondary education supérieur and university education between 1988 and 1993, observed from 1989 to 1994) (page 57), by the type of course taken in upper secondary education (page 58) and in university education (page 59).
- Level of the highest diploma obtained and labour market status 7 years after completion of compulsory education, by national origin (Swedish/non-Swedish) and sex (page 60).
- Labour market status, type of work (term or indefinite contract, full- or part-time, private or public sector, matching or not matching up to the diploma obtained) by sex, waiting period before the first stable job (minimum six months) by the type of stream and sex, 3 years after leaving school, young diploma-holders from upper secondary education and higher education (page 62).

UNITED KINGDOM

SWITZERLAND

In the documents consulted for Switzerland (*Système de formation en Suisse. Éléments d'une mosaïque*, 1991 and *les Indicateurs de l'enseignement en Suisse. L'enseignement en mutation dans notre pays*, 1995, both published by the Office fédéral de la Statistique), we found no specific indicators of the transition between the educational system and working life except for those on the proportions of diploma-holders from different levels of study and training.

CEDEFOP — European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training

The transition from the educational system to working life

Use of national statistics

Christine Mainguet

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The transition from the educational system to working life

Use of national statistics

At this time of high unemployment, especially among young people, analysis of the steps in the transition between the educational system and working life has become an important field of study. Surveys are being developed, research networks set up, etc. The aim of this report is to arrive at an understanding of the factors that ensure the success of vocational integration and offer protection against unemployment.

Statistical studies on the transition cannot of course, as things now stand, produce clear-cut answers, but what they can do is to state the questions and sometimes challenge received ideas on the prospects offered by the various streams of study.

This report is intended to be a provisional review of the various national surveys existing in Europe, the comparative research conducted as a result, the main variables surveyed, the methodological problems encountered, the principal findings, the questions still unanswered and the hypotheses. It also reviews the national surveys currently gathering information on the transition, the existing research networks, comparative studies and, at the end, an exhaustive bibliography.

For the researcher, then, this report is a sort of interim review, in that it highlights the hypotheses that need to be developed, the improvements to be made to the data-gathering tools, the comparisons and harmonisation that are called for and the variables and indicators needing further investigation.

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